Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-FIVE • NUMBER TWO • FEBRUARY 1993

The Bitter Legacies of Malcolm X
Tamar Jacoby

What the Holocaust Does Not Teach
Edward Alexander

The Euromess
Angelo M. Codevilla

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The Limits of Term Limits
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Rabbi Nahman and the Effendi—A Story
Yehoshua Bar-Yosef

Against the Independent Counsel

Robert H. Bork

Books in Review: Arch Puddington / Leonard Garment / Christopher Clausen / Robert S. Wistrich / Jeffrey Salmon

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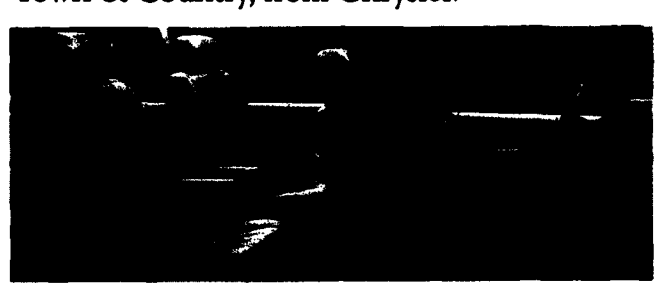

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Lustration

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

George Weigel's essay on lustration in Czechoslovakia ["Their Lustration—and Ours," October 1992] is well-informed and just. However, I would like to add one comment which, I hope, will clarify certain aspects of the lustration phenomenon not dealt with by Mr. Weigel.

Mr. Weigel explains the original intention of the law well: it was to remove high Communist-party officials, state-security (StB) agents, and their collaborators for five years from public life, so that their chance to sabotage the healing process of Czechoslovak society would be limited.

Stephen Engelberg of the *New York Times* (quoted by Mr. Weigel) thinks that the lustration law was the creation of "self-serving politicians" (i.e., non-Communist politicians) who wanted "to divert attention from the grim reality [of economic transition] to 'decommunization.'" He is right in that the events following the passing of the lustration law did indeed involve an attempt to "divert attention"—from the "grim reality" of the continuing existence of the Communist party which, by international standards applied to the German National Socialist party, is a criminal organization.

What is not mentioned in Mr. Weigel's fine article is that *after* passing the lustration law, and shortly *before* the elections of summer 1992, an allegedly "Complete List of StB Collaborators" was anonymously leaked to the tabloid *Rude kravo* (a pun on *Rude pravo*, or "Red Light," the Communist daily, meaning approximately "Red Cow"). This highly dubious and unauthorized list contained some 160,000 names of alleged StB agents, including such personalities as the late Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Tomasck; the Hollywood actor and former dissident Jan Triska; well-known opponents of Communism such as the artist Joska Skalnik, a personal friend of Vaclav Havel; Karel Srp, the chairman of the persecuted Jazz Section of the Czech Musicians Union; P.L. Doruzka, the widely respected musicologist and jazz historian; and many other such names, not much known in the West but well known, if not famous, in Czechoslovakia. What these people have in common is not their alleged collaboration with the security police but the fact that they are all non-Communists, in many cases dissidents, and even former political prisoners (Skalnik, Srp).

It was to be expected that the gossips of Czechoslovakia would uncritically accept the list, and the dubious document became the talk of the country. In some small towns and villages people whose names appeared on the list suffered ostracism and various forms of humiliation, including graffiti on their doors such as "StB Informer!," etc.

It is not known who leaked the list to *Rude kravo*. But if one asks oneself the good old criminologist's question *Cui bono?*, it is not difficult to guess who has profited from the leak. It is, of course, the Communist party. Attention, as Engelberg writes, has indeed been diverted—not, however, from the economy (which is at the moment not particularly grim in Czechoslovakia), but from the fact that the Velvet Revolution did not instigate any "witch hunts" against Communists (as Jeri Laber, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, seems to think); that it did not carry out any effective "decommunization"; and that, therefore, in the minds of those who amuse themselves by studying the list and spreading gossip, membership in that criminal organization no longer means disgrace. The burden of public opprobrium now falls on the alleged "StB collaborators," while people who for 40 years supported the damaging activities of their party, even Communists who are known to have committed serious crimes, appear somehow blameless. For example: Mr. Pich-Tuma who, in 1968, confessed to having murdered several political opponents on party orders, is alive and well, enjoying his pension, and so is Ladislav Macha who, in 1950, murdered Father Josef Toutar—a murder which is the main motif in my novel *Miracle Game*. And whereas Jan Kavan, who for twenty years headed the Palach Press agency in London, the main source of information about repression in Czechoslovakia, had to leave parliament, Alexecj Pludek,

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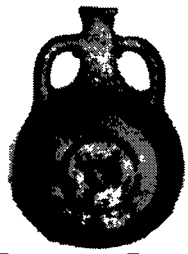

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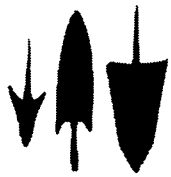

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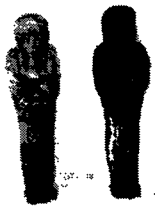

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the author of the incredibly anti-Semitic novel *Vabank* (1973), which explains the events of the Dubcek year 1968 as a Jewish conspiracy against socialism, is a deputy of the Left bloc in the current parliament.

The reliability of the leaked list is highly dubious, to say the least. According to a recent statement by the chairman of the Lustration Committee, out of 300 applicants for lustration whose names are on the list, only thirteen were found guilty of some sort of collaboration with the StB. The rest had been put on the list by StB agents who wanted to earn bonuses for recruiting collaborators (remember Gogol's "dead souls"?); others were added because, after interrogation, they signed the customary pledge not to mention the interrogation to anyone; still others wrote routine reports on trips abroad which, in most cases, did not contain anything damaging to anyone, and were simply filed away by StB officers who had to show "activity," etc. All such people have now been used, by the unknown person or persons who leaked the list, to divert attention from the criminal to his victim. For the truth is rather simple: if there had not been a Communist party, there would be no StB, and there would be no names for any such lists.

I think that people in the West who are interested in post-Communist Central Europe should know about these two faces of the Czechoslovak lustration law: one legitimate, the aim of which is to exclude high officials of the Communist party and its various subsidiaries from public life for five years; and the other, detestable but rather characteristic of Communist methods, the aim of which is to provide the public with a scapegoat so that people will forget the criminals still at large among us.

JOSEF SKVORECKY
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am writing to express my gratitude for George Weigel's article, which so lucidly depicts the confused politics (and ethics) of those who protest against decommunization in the former Soviet-bloc countries; one can only hope it will be translated and made available to readers in these countries. I fear, however, that such a thing would be impossible, since it would be extremely difficult to find any influential journal willing to publish Mr. Weigel's opinions. Indeed, more than 90 percent of the Polish press would not only refuse to publish an article in favor of decommunization, but would also describe Mr. Weigel's position as "reactionary," "primitive," an example of "zoological anti-Communism," etc., etc. I am afraid this would also be the fate of Mr. Weigel's opinions in other post-Communist countries as well.

I differ with Mr. Weigel on only one point, but it is an important one. There is no contrast—as the article seems to suggest—between American or Western intellectuals (and media) and their East European and Central European counterparts on the question of their aversion to recognizing Communism as evil and punishing its crimes. Czechoslovakia is the only country where a kind of decommunization (the so-called *lustrace* law) has been sanctioned, and the decision of the Czechoslovak federal parliament to pass this law was met in Poland with a barrage of protests and, of course, an outburst of "moral indignation" on the part of the leading intellectuals of the former Polish opposition.

Adam Michnik, who is mentioned in Mr. Weigel's article as an East European intellectual who has "stressed the importance for Poland of a recovery of the Christian notion of self-sacrifice," is, as it happens, the most prominent exponent of all the arguments against any kind of political, judicial, or even moral punishment of former Commmunist-party leaders and agents of the security services. Michnik is editor-in-chief of the biggest daily in Poland, which totally dominates the political scene. A few dissenters—intellectuals who signed public declarations of support for the idea of lustration—are currently being described as "sick" or, in Michnik's words, as "Chinese Red Guards." (Can you imagine the poet Zbigniew Herbert—one of the signers of the declaration—as a bloodthirsty "Red Guard"?) To preclude any attempt at decommunization, Michnik's supporters, writing in the best-known intellectual weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, went so far as to condemn the very idea of denazification in postwar Germany. After all, it was undemocratic and violated the human rights of the former Nazis, did it not?

What are the reasons for this madness? The problem deserves more discussion than can be covered within the space of this letter. Interested readers should look at the Summer 1992 issue of the quarterly journal, *Uncaptive Minds*, which is entirely devoted to the problems of lustration in Eastern and Central Europe. Some illuminating thoughts about the roots of this astonishing situation are also to be found in Alain Besançon's COMMENTARY article, "Can Poland Ever Be Free?" [April 1989].

In conclusion, I must offer a correction to Mr. Weigel's assertion that

> Central and East European intellectuals had grasped . . . a moral truth that many American intellectuals and professionals had forgotten: that only a life lived "in the truth" [Vaclav Havel's phrase] . . . was worthy of a human being.

Sadly, Central and East European intellectuals—or at least most of them—have now abandoned that moral truth. With decommunization, it would be hard enough to adhere to this standard (as it always is when one enters the political realm). Without decommunization, it is simply impossible.

ANDRZEJ NOWAK
Arka
Cracow, Poland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

George Weigel's cogent suggestion that many self-proclaimed Western liberals should atone for their moral and intellectual obtuseness during the cold war brought to mind several memorable experiences.

In 1970, I visited the Soviet Union with an American Civil Liberties Union delegation. On my own, I met members of the newly emerging Soviet-Jewish emigration movement in unforgettable encounters in seven Soviet cities. I carried out the last letter written by two Leningrad activists before their arrest and long-term imprisonment. As a result of what my new-found Soviet-Jewish friends, almost all of whom now live in Israel, told me . . . , I became an active participant in the advocacy struggle for Soviet Jews. In my efforts to sensitize persons who were being courted by the Soviets to the notion that human rights were no less important than the lofty goals of "world peace," disarmament,

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and détente, the following incidents actually took place:

• A prominent Protestant clergyman had indicated that, as a member of a church delegation visiting Moscow, he might raise the subject of Soviet Jewry with Soviet officials. I subsequently read in a newspaper that, in the presence of the American churchmen, several Russian-Christian fundamentalists who unfurled a banner pleading for religious freedom during a church service had been roughly dragged from the church, without any protests from the Americans. Upon his return, I asked the clergyman if the report were true. He acknowledged that it was, and added that his Soviet hosts had explained that these believers were not regular members of that church! I realized that a clergyman who was afraid to speak up for his own co-religionists was not likely to do much for Soviet Jews.

• A prestigious foundation took representatives of several Protestant church groups to the USSR. An official of the foundation called me and volunteered to deliver a prayer book to a Soviet Jew. I arranged for her to be briefed by a former refusenik. When she returned, I asked her what had happened. Without apparent shame, she told me that the delegation had unanimously decided while *en route* to Moscow not to get embroiled in any "political" questions. Thus, the politically-incorrect *siddur* was jettisoned in Frankfurt as an impediment to "peace."

• A group of Soviet scientists (accompanied of course by KGB escorts) came to a resort near Chicago for a highly publicized conference with American scientists. We organized a demonstration outside the resort to urge the scientists to speak up on behalf of the human rights of Soviet Jews. Many (but not all) of the American scientists—and the *Chicago Sun-Times* in an editorial—urged us to cancel the rally because "quiet diplomacy" would be more effective. We refused. The rally generated worldwide publicity at a time when little was known of the aspirations of Soviet Jews. A group of Soviet-Jewish scientists smuggled out a letter thanking us for our efforts. The efficacy of "quiet diplomacy" was also urged upon me by a high White House aide, a high-living Soviet "journalist," and numerous American editors and professors.

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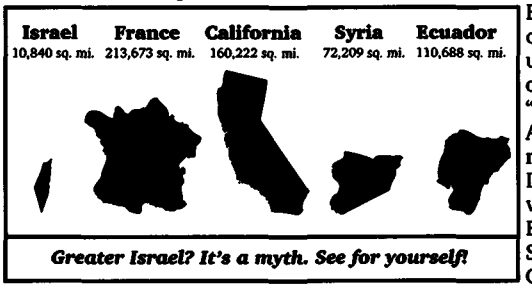
In May of 1989, James Baker, declared in an address to AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) that the Jewish state should once and for all forget about "the dream of a greater Israel". It was the first time that this phrase had been heard from the lips of a Western statesman. What does it mean? Does it have any relation to reality?

What are the facts?

Stripes on the flag. Arab propaganda has it that the two stripes on the flag of Israel, above and below the star of David, represent the Nile and the Euphrates River, respectively, and signify Israel's expansionist desire to form an empire that would supposedly reach from Cairo to Baghdad. But that has no basis in fact, of course. Nowhere in any documents of the Jewish state, in any statement by even the most "radical" spokesman can any reference to anything like that be found.

Israel's Borders. "Palestine", part of the Ottoman Empire before World War I, came under British mandate after that war. The Golan Heights were part of Palestine. Israel's current borders are the result of the 1948 War of Independence, in which six Arab armies invaded the new-born state, but were utterly defeated, and the 1967 Six-Day War, in which those same armies once again invaded Israel. In that war, Israel conquered the Gaza Strip, the vast Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. And Israel also *repossessed* the provinces of Judea/Samaria, (the "West Bank"), and the eastern part of Jerusalem, which had been occupied by the Jordanians nineteen years earlier when they invaded the just new-born Jewish state. In order to achieve peace with Egypt, Israel returned to it all of the Sinai. Israel is and has always been prepared to grant full autonomy to the Arabs living in Judea/Samaria. It is clear to all knowledgeable in military matters that, for immutable strategic reasons, Israel cannot for any foreseeable future abandon or yield military control of Judea/Samaria and of the Golan Heights.



Greater Israel? It's a myth. See for yourself!

The Myth of Greater Israel. Israel is one of the smallest countries in the world. Most people don't realize how small it really is. One wonders whether former Secretary of State Baker was aware of it when he uttered his memorable phrase of "Greater Israel". A look at the map is revealing. Including the vaunted "West Bank", the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, the entire area of the country is barely over 10,000 square miles. France is twenty times as large as Israel, California fifteen time as large, Syria about seven times as large, and "tiny" Ecuador ten times as large. Israel is so small that its area is less than half the size of San Bernadino County, California; if it were dropped into Lake Michigan it would disappear from sight without a trace. The Arab countries in contrast are huge—they occupy twice the area of the United States.

It is clear that the concept of "Greater Israel", lacks any validity and has no basis in fact. To apply such a concept to a country as small as Israel would almost seem a mockery. Obviously, Israel has no territorial ambitions. All it wants is to live in peace within secure and defensible borders, just as any other country and as required under U.N. Resolution No. 242. But it seems that the *size* of Israel, whether "greater" or "lesser" is not at all the concern of Israel's implacable Arab enemies. The very *existence* of Israel, of a Jewish state in their midst of whatever size, is unacceptable to the Arabs. And unless that mindset changes, not until the Arab states have become democracies and have come to full acceptance of Israel, are willing to make *true* peace with it, and are prepared to establish normal and friendly relations with Israel can any possible territorial adjustment be considered. As it looks right now, that may still take some time.

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• A Jewish "humanist" group invited me to speak. I told the story of the first of my Moscow friends to be granted an exit visa (after he had been beaten by Soviet police). This young physicist had told me that when the airplane took off from Moscow, his elderly mother (an American Communist who had moved to Russia in the 1930's) exclaimed: "Lenya, now I believe in God." A physician and a mortgage banker then angrily left the meeting in protest, saying such things couldn't happen in the Soviet Union.

There is a fundamental lesson which these mindless crusaders for "peace" without human rights never could grasp: enduring peace is unlikely to be achieved with nondemocratic regimes because those regimes perpetuate their power by practicing violence against their own people. The cold war ended only after the regimes of the "Evil Empire" collapsed. According to the Talmud, "Great is repentance, for it brings healing to the world." Will the learned dupes who were so consistently and cravenly wrong in refusing to speak up for democracy in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union repent by displaying a little humility before imposing their wisdom on other parts of the world where the existence of nondemocratic regimes continues to impede peace?

JOEL J. SPRAYREGEN
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

George Weigel's case against Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) as "accommodationist" is understated. The best exposé of that organization (which later metamorphosed into International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) appears in *Soviet Propaganda and the Physicians' Peace Movement* (1988), written by Jack Rosenblatt, a Vancouver doctor, and published by the Mackenzie Institute of Toronto.

PSR held its first conference in staunchly Communist Bulgaria in 1981. The Soviet delegation was led not by a doctor, but by Georgi Arbatov, an ideologue from the Central Committee of the Communist party. John Barron, an authority on the Soviet secret police, noted that "Arbatov did most of the talking."

Naturally, Arbatov blamed the cold war on the United States and the socially-responsible physicians did not object. According to the *Toronto Star*, they welcomed him with "thunderous applause."

The Soviet co-founder of PSR was Evgeny Chazov, who was presented at the conference as a simple doctor and private physician. In fact, he was a high-ranking Soviet official who, in 1973, cosigned a letter denouncing Andrei Sakharov for "irresponsible statements" and "slander against our people." The *New York Times* reprinted the whole of Chazov's denunciation.

In 1982, the Soviets became bolder and sent General M.A. Milshtein of their military-intelligence department to the PSR annual conference. In 1985, PSR brought to Canada and the U.S. Dr. Marat Vartanyan, from Moscow's sinister Institute for Criminal Psychiatry, which misused psychiatry—turning it into psychoterror—for political reasons.

GREG LANNING
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

GEORGE WEIGEL writes:

Josef Skvorecky's noble record of opposition to Communism in Czechoslovakia gives him a distinctive moral vantage point in the debate over the *lustrace* law. He and I are wholly agreed on the necessity of this legislative attempt to prevent the hijacking of Czechoslovakia's nascent democracy and market economy. We are also united in our contempt for those who have abused the lustration process for their own political ends—which include the avoidance of responsibility for the damage done to Czechoslovakia's environment, society, culture, and economy by 41 years of Communist rule. My only question to Mr. Skvorecky would be whether the leaked "list" is best understood as a "face" of the lustration law, or whether it should be regarded as the most recent, odious moment in the long and tawdry history of the Communist assault on the moral ecology of Czechoslovakia.

Andrzej Nowak's letter is a reminder of how the decommunization debate in Poland—as elsewhere—has intersected with, and in some instances been confused by, other struggles over the politics of post-Communist societies. In some cases, for example, one wonders whether former dissidents resist the notion of decommunization primarily because it is identified with "conservative" politics. (Others, to be sure, have a principled, if in my view erroneous, position against decommunization.) In any event, the actual experience of lustration in the former Czechoslovakia, and the debate over decommunization in Poland, both suggest that serious attempts to come to grips with the crimes of the past might best be carried out by legally-established independent tribunals that are as insulated as possible from the cut-and-thrust of daily politics—and from the manipulations of those whose disentanglement from their former Communist convictions and connections is not entirely clear.

I am grateful for Joel J. Sprayregen's letter, although I fear that any hope for humility from the parties whose idiocies and mendacities he catalogues is, at best, an exercise in eschatological expectation. Greg Lanning is also right: perhaps he might communicate his concerns to the Norwegian Nobel committee, which awarded the Peace Prize to International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and the egregious Dr. Chazov in 1985.

Bosnia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Continuing congratulations are due COMMENTARY for its serious and balanced approach to the issues of the Yugoslav war, as exemplified first by Josef Joffe's "Bosnia: The Return of History" [October 1992] and then by Joshua Muravchik's "The Strange Debate Over Bosnia" [November 1992]. The magazine has provided a moral and intellectual framework for efforts to understand this terrible conflict.

In the great volume of recently published analyses of the Balkan crisis, Mr. Joffe's article stands out for its factuality, thoughtfulness, and balance. I would disagree with him on only a few points. First, it is a bit unfair to describe the Croat leader Franjo Tudjman as one "whose ideological roots reach back into the clerical fascism of the Ustasha period," as Mr. Joffe does.

Tudjman, whose career I have followed and whom I have interviewed, is a sentimental, conservative nationalist, with an apparent leaning toward a semi-authoritarian, Gaullist presidential style. During the post-Tito period but before his election to power, he wrote a

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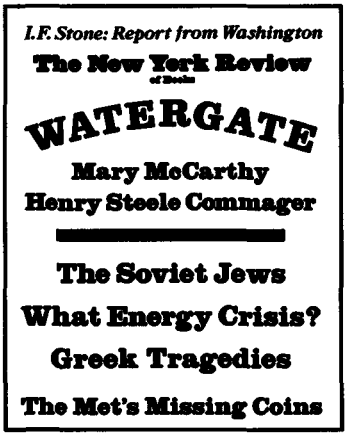

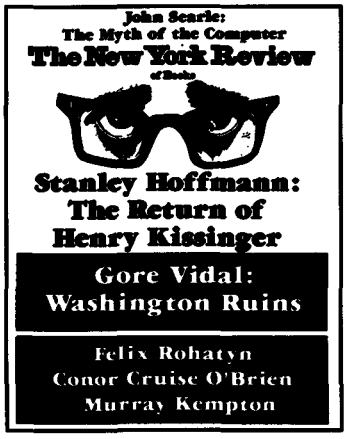

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number of works in a spirit of rather unsophisticated and insensitive "historical investigation." Included in these were citations from anti-Semitic sources, presented without the strong disclaimer with which such quotes should have been accompanied.

For this and other reasons, Tudjman has found it difficult to dissociate himself from the presumption of a historic link between the pseudo-independence of the Croatian Ustasha state under the Nazis and the independent Croatia of the present time. And, as Mr. Joffe points out, Tudjman seems to be following a deceitful course leading to a deal with the Bosnian Serbs at the expense of the Bosnian Muslim population.

But Tudjman has insisted that his government looks back historically to the Croat Left of the interwar and Partisan period, mainly represented by the Croat Peasant party, which was nationalist but democratic, and which generally opposed the Ustasha. . . .

With regard to the political situation inside Croatia today, two events seem especially important. On September 22, 1992, the Jewish community of Zagreb, the Croatian capital, reopened its community center, which had been the site of a bombing last year by persons unknown. The building has been "fully restored, refurbished, and expanded, largely with government funds," according to a dispatch from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Tudjman's government provided a loan of $2.5 million for this project. . . . The opening ceremony was attended by Israel Singer of the World Jewish Congress and Yosef Burg, the head of the National Religious party in Israel, as well as Mate Granic, a member of Tudjman's cabinet. (Tudjman was in New York at the UN.)

Also, during the last week in September Tudjman's government took serious measures against an armed group that genuinely seeks to revive the Ustasha, the Croat Party of Rights (HSP), headed by a former dissident, Dobroslav Paraga. . . .

As for Joshua Muravchik's excellent article, I would add only one further point. He warns that "the Serbs might also . . . try to 'cleanse' Vojvodina," referring to the northern, formerly autonomous province of the Serbian Republic, which has a considerable minority population of ethnic Hungarians (some half-million Magyars lived in Tito's Yugoslavia).

In fact, as was noted in the recent report on the Yugoslav war by Helsinki Watch, ethnic Hungarians, Croats, and Ruthenians in Vojvodina have been subjected to Serbian "ethnic-cleansing" efforts (although in forms less immediately drastic than elsewhere).

Indeed, the Baranja region of eastern Croatia, a site of major fighting in 1991, has also seen Serbian "ethnic cleansing" targeted at Hungarians and Ruthenians along with Croatians. In Bosnia the victims have included not only Croats and Slavic Muslims but, once again, Hungarians and Ruthenians. Slovaks and Turks, . . . each of which numbered about 100,000 in the old Yugoslav state, and members of small Bosnian communities of Albanians, Czechs, and even Italians, have likewise been driven from their homes.

In August, Ivica Ceresnjes, president of the Jewish community of Sarajevo and a strong partisan of the Bosnian loyalist government, reported that Jews had been swept up in the tide of "ethnic cleansing" in northern Bosnia and had been "dumped like packages, alive but barely so" in the loyalist zone.

However, it is clear that Jews were not singled out in this situation. Nedzib Sacirbey, Bosnia-Herzegovina's diplomatic representative in Washington, noted that the common element among the victims was that none were Orthodox Christians—the Hungarians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Czechs, and Italians being (mainly) Catholic, while the Albanians are mainly Muslims. . . .

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ
San Francisco Chronicle
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Josef Joffe's conclusion regarding Bosnia contains a lesson all nations should learn from the war: military might counts for more than all the sympathy one can receive from international organizations, foreign governments, and the media. Bosnia's President Alija Izetbegovic learned this the hard way.

Izetbegovic, rather naively, took no major steps to establish even the seeds of a fighting force. While Serbia's war against Croatia raged all around him, Izetbegovic promoted himself as a peace-maker, winning plaudits from Western leaders and diplomats. But when war erupted in Bosnia, these same leaders and diplomats did nothing to help him. . . .

Though Mr. Joffe's conclusion is correct, his discussion of the immediate causes of the war is widely off the mark. The "Serbian onslaught" against Croatia and Slovenia did not begin with the latter's declaration of independence, but with Slobodan Milosevic's rise to power in Serbia in late 1987.

Relying on Serb antipathy toward Kosovo's Albanians, Milosevic sponsored mass demonstrations demanding Serb dominance in Kosovo, calling for the resignation of anti-Milosevic politicians, and espousing pro-Chetnik, anti-Slovene, anti-Croat, and anti-Albanian rhetoric. During 1988 and 1989 Milosevic had his followers demonstrate in Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro, causing the fall of the local governments to Milosevic loyalists.

By late 1989, Milosevic's cronies threatened to hold similar demonstrations in Zagreb and Ljubljana. This, coupled with the growing demands for democratization, forced Slovenian and Croatian Communists to press for free elections, a position opposed by Milosevic. By December 1989, Milosevic's obstinacy caused the unified Yugoslav Communist party to disintegrate.

Franjo Tudjman and his party easily won elections in Croatia in April 1990. Almost immediately, Milosevic's proxies began to agitate against the Croatian government. Within the next several months the Croatian government lost control of certain parts of Croatia to Milosevic supporters; this was almost a year before Croatia's declaration of independence.

Contrary to Mr. Joffe's assertions, Tudjman cannot be compared to Milosevic. Unlike Milosevic, who spent his career as a Communist apparatchik until his rise to power, Tudjman was purged from the Communist party in the late 1960's and subsequently spent several years in jail because of his political views.

Though Tudjman may not necessarily be a "liberal democrat," his ideological roots are certainly not based in the clerical-fascist ideology of the Ustasha, as Mr. Joffe maintains. . . . Not only did Tudj-

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man fight with the Partisans against the Ustasha during World War II, he has continued to speak out against the Ustasha. . . .

As for the treatment of minorities, Croatia's 1990 constitution . . . states that the republic is

> established as the national state of the Croatian nation and a state of members of other nations and minorities who are its citizens: Serbs, Muslims, Slovenes, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, and others, who are guaranteed equality with citizens of Croatian nationality and the realization of ethnic rights in accordance with the democratic norms of the United Nations and the free world countries.

. . . Mr. Joffe's allegation that no moral issues were faced with respect to the war in Slovenia and Croatia is completely at odds with the facts. Slovenia and Croatia did not simply secede, "without trying for a peaceful divorce," as Mr. Joffe states. All parties participated in numerous talks after democratic elections in Slovenia and Croatia, while Milosevic simultaneously sponsored rebellion in Croatia. Milosevic and his allies in the Yugoslav army were simply opposed to any changes in the country's system.

What subsequently occurred in Croatia was simply a preview, on a smaller scale, of what is currently occurring in Bosnia. Cities and towns of no strategic importance were attacked by Serbian forces, ethnic cleansing was carried out, and the mass murder of innocent civilians took place. The same moral issues facing the world in Bosnia were faced in Croatia. Indeed, the war in Bosnia is a mere continuation of Serbia's war in Croatia. . . .

JOHN P. KRALJIC
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his perceptive article, Joshua Muravchik refers to the "parade of experts [who] told us how tough a nut Iraq was," including retired Colonel David Hackwirth who stated that "Yugoslavia is an impossible mission."

Among other experts who have recommended against U.S. military intervention in the former Yugoslavia is our respected military leader General Colin Powell. It may be of interest, however, that on the Second Annual Refugee Day, sponsored by the U.S. State Department in October 1991, General Powell responded to the award given to the Armed Forces for "humanitarian relief operations" as follows:

> As we saw in the Persian Gulf, war cannot always be deterred. And when that happens, we must be able to fight well, to resolve the conflict decisively, with minimum loss of life.
>
> But the same ability that we have to fight wars can be brought to bear to deal with humanitarian emergencies: not to take life, but to protect and to preserve life. In the United States, this is as much our tradition as is our prowess in battle. . . .

At that same ceremony, Lieutenant General John M. Shalikashvili reported the U.S. Army's rescue of

> hundreds of thousands, if not millions [of Kurds], who fled the advancing Iraqi army . . . in rugged, extremely remote mountains. . . .

General Shalikashvili described how 18,000 U.S. service men and women, . . . and some 11,000 troops from twelve coalition countries, . . . together with hundreds of experienced relief workers, "achieved miracles" so that "literally within days the headlines of death in the mountains disappeared."

Certainly, the tragedies of the Kurds in Iraq and the refugees in former Yugoslavia are not completely parallel, but the humanitarian achievements so graphically described by Generals Powell and Shalikashvili should be reassuring to our government leaders and the people of America as we face the responsibility to help save the terrorized victims of this new European human disaster. Mr. Muravchik was referring primarily to U.S. military intervention, whereas the generals' statements referred to humanitarian missions. Clearly, though, just as in the Persian Gulf, military and humanitarian missions in the former Yugoslavia are related.

Nevertheless, as one who has been directly involved in the rescue of Holocaust survivors in 1945-46; Hungarian refugees in 1956-57; Cubans in the 1960's; and Vietnamese in the 1970's, I can confirm with gratitude that the role of U.S. military forces was indispensable in each of these missions, and was carried out exactly as Generals Powell and Shalikashvili described it, in cooperation with experienced relief workers.

JAMES P. RICE
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joshua Muravchik is to be commended for his efforts in making the case for military intervention in Bosnia. Yet like Congressman Lee Hamilton, whom he quotes, Mr. Muravchik gets his concepts mixed up, thus diluting his argument. He argues in favor of "humanitarian intervention"—something the United States has traditionally avoided. In fact, he means intervention to stem aggression, which the United States has occasionally engaged in. Does the difference matter? Here, Charles Krauthammer, whether he is correct or not in suggesting that U.S. policy-makers do not have the right to intervene for humanitarian purposes, is certainly correct in saying that the overwhelming popular perception is that:

> [Statesmen] . . . do not have the right to launch their nations into large, unfathomable military adventures, to risk not their lives but the lives of their countrymen, purely out of humanitarian feeling.

From both a legal and political vantage point, the most persuasive basis for U.S. military engagement, especially insofar as it has a multinational or UN component, remains the deterrence of aggression. Serbia's attacks against Sarajevo clearly constitute aggression. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, comprising Serbia and Montenegro, is recognized, at least *de facto*, as a state by the community of nations, although the UN General Assembly has deferred its admission to UN membership. Bosnia-Herzegovina is a state which has been recognized as an independent nation and admitted to UN membership. If Serbia is permitted to continue to bomb Bosnia indiscriminately and engage in "ethnic cleansing" without any effort at halting it, international instability from the Balkans to the Caucasus and encouragement of other Milosevics throughout the region is the nearly inevitable consequence. For that reason, as Mr. Muravchik points out, intervention is in the national interest.

Nor are we talking about "mission impossible." True, it may be late in the day to intervene to stem Serbian aggression, but the mis-

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takes that have been made in dealing with Serbia are not irreversible. Serbia is a small country. And NATO in its recent meetings has made clear the expansion of its military planning to handle such problems and, concurrently, its changed role from serving as a bulwark to Soviet aggression to the guarantor of peace for the "Euro-Atlantic" region. But active NATO diplomacy backed by force has not been vigorously pursued. . . .

With the cold war over, whether we confront a new order, or a new world disorder, depends on what we do. Serbia will be the important test. . . . True, an intermediate approach between inaction and intervention has also been suggested as appropriate. It is important to send out word that in the end the guilty will be punished, that the victims will be compensated, that there will be war-crimes trials and perhaps the establishment of a commission to compensate the victims of Bosnian aggression. UN Security Council resolutions stressing nonrecognition of territories gained through aggression, the continued withholding of UN membership from Yugoslavia, and calls for the lifting of the current embargo (which does more good than harm to Serbia) are important. But all of this is after the fact. As a deterrent, these measures have minimal value. If it is true that the Serbians understand the language of force, the threat of war-crimes trials and similar sanctions, important as they are, is not that language.

Thus, if the Clinton administration is serious about halting Serbia's aggression and atrocities, and is interested in doing so through multilateral means, it will have to come to understand that Serbia's aggression is no less a serious affront to international order than Iraq's aggression against Kuwait. Indeed, the human tragedy of a siege against a civilian population makes the case for intervention in Bosnia as compelling, if not more so, than the case for intervention against Iraq. And, like Iraq for President Bush, Bosnia will be an issue that President Clinton will not be able to walk away from.

ALLAN GERSON
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia

JOSEF JOFFE writes:

I welcome Stephen Schwartz's additions to my skimpy portrayal of Franjo Tudjman. It is probably more correct to call him an authoritarian "conservative nationalist," though one could also argue that his books, *The Wastelands of Historical Truth, Big Ideas and Little Nations,* and *Nationalism and Contemporary Europe* do contain plenty of clues and quotes that point to an anti-Semitic mind-set. It is also true that, more recently, Tudjman has countered this impression by, for instance, supporting the repeal of the UN's "Zionism-equals-racism" resolution and by inviting Jewish intellectuals to join his government. So, possibly, I might have been a "bit unfair" to him.

At any rate, and this is in response to John P. Kraljic, I did not seek to exculpate in any way whatsoever Slobodan Milosevic by pointing out Croat blemishes. Serbia clearly is the aggressor. But the Croats are not pussycats, either; indeed, there is an unholy alliance between the Serbs and the Croats who have virtually partitioned Bosnia between them.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

I thank Stephen Schwartz and James P. Rice for their kind words and their interesting additions to the discussion. My friend Allan Gerson seems to want to quarrel with me even though we are on the same side on this issue, as on many others. If I was "mixed up" before reading his letter, I'm a lot more mixed up since. He complains that I argue for humanitarian intervention in Bosnia. But I say as plain as day in my article that while some threshold exists beyond which humanitarian abuses warrant military intervention, we need not decide whether that threshold has been crossed in Bosnia because U.S. security interests alone justify action there. Mr. Gerson concludes by arguing that "the human tragedy . . . makes the case for intervention in Bosnia . . . compelling." Now I'm really mixed up.

Screen Test

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his discussion of the recent Sidney Lumet film, *A Stranger Among Us* ["Holy Hollywood!," November 1992], Edward Norden goes out of his way to deride Brooklyn's hasidic community. The hasidic traits "missing from [Lumet's] portrayal" include, according to Mr. Norden,

> the strain of craziness, the fear of and contempt for blacks and Puerto Ricans, the sticky linoleum, the peaked mothers, . . . the scams on lapsed Jews with money.

This wholesale smear of the Hasidim in Williamsburgh based on the perceived actions or traits of some members of that community is unfortunate and offensive. Surely COMMENTARY recognizes that the kind of blanket indictment that Mr. Norden offers does not come across as candid, but rather more unpleasantly. We found Mr. Norden's offhanded and ill-expressed contempt unworthy of COMMENTARY.

ABRAHAM H. FOXMAN
National Director
Anti-Defamation League
New York City

EDWARD NORDEN writes:

Context is almost everything. The passage Abraham H. Foxman objects to and quotes out of context was part of my review of a movie about the Hasidim directed by a Jewish leftist famous for his gritty, realistic images of New York City and all its inhabitants. I remarked on the remarkable, unexpectedly idealized, quite un-gritty image of these particular Jews of-

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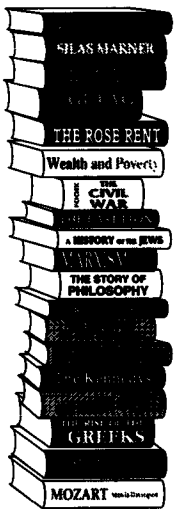

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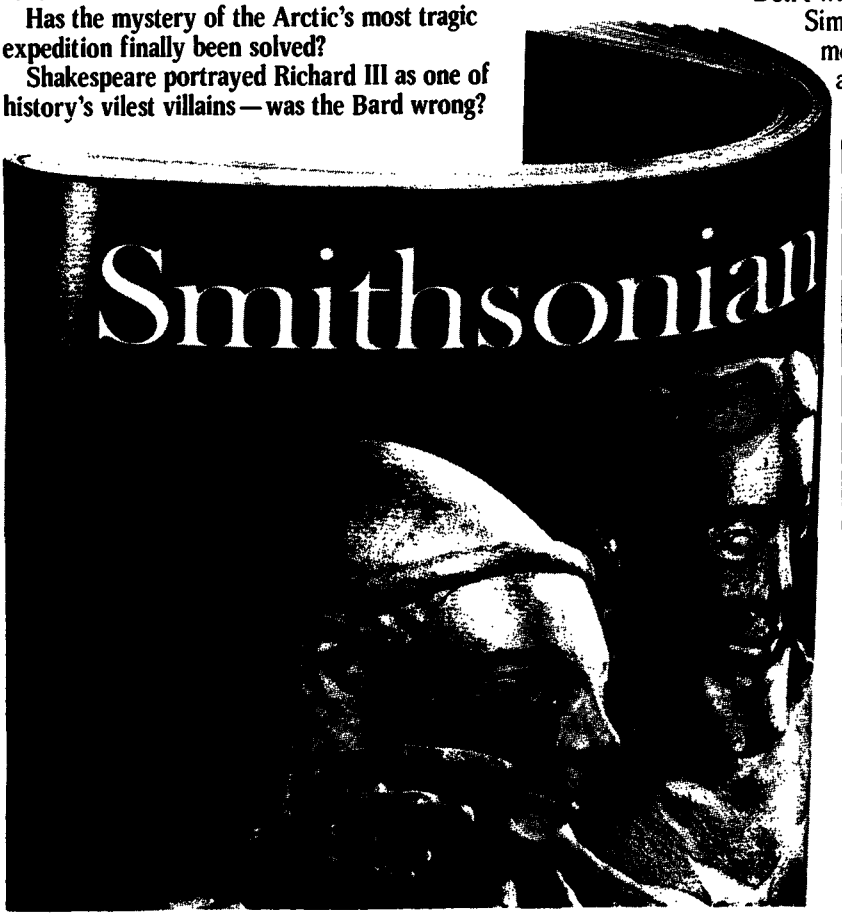

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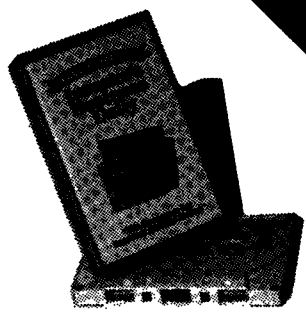

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fered by Lumet. If *A Stranger Among Us* had been realistic, it would not have left out the nice things about hasidic life, but it would certainly have caught "the strain of craziness," etc. No one who has been among the Hasidim, and who is honest, will deny that in fact they are not a community of happy, healthy saints.

Does saying this amount to defamation? Is it a "wholesale smear"? Did I go out of my way to deride? I don't believe a man from Mars would think so. The trouble is, too few Martians read COMMENTARY. Or putting it another way, there are contexts and contexts. I suspect that what really upset Mr. Foxman was not my allusion to certain "perceived actions and traits" but the location and timing of publication—i.e., at a time when the Hasidim are perceived as besieged, shouldn't honesty take second place to Jewish solidarity? Why give the anti-Semites ammunition?

Old questions. They used to be asked of Zionist writers in Europe, including, of course, Theodor Herzl. They, too, were accused of contempt for their own, and who can guarantee that they never felt it? Although no Herzl, I confess that, as I see it, a Jewish writer's best policy, the one which will get him into heaven, is honesty. This is also the policy which in the long run is most apt to serve all those of his readers who aren't anti-Semites. Does this mean that Mr. Foxman doesn't know how to make a Jew feel ever so slightly guilty? Certainly not.

The Oppositionist

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Allan Nadler's powerful review of *Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State*, by Yeshayahu Leibowitz [Books in Review, November 1992], calls attention to yet another emperor's nakedness. Mr. Nadler implicitly raises two questions.

1. If Leibowitz took contrary positions to those Israel-loathing ones that he so ferociously proclaims, would anyone pay attention to him?

2. Why did Harvard, of all presses, publish so tendentious and obviously sectarian a document?

The two questions add up to one answer: the man is a creation of his own politically-correct opinions. Saying what the right people want to have someone say, he gets a whole lot of publicity. But the fact is, as dogmatic and poorly argued as the book is, . . . the man at a seminar is still less able to argue cogently. I attended a session with him fifteen years ago, at which he sat in the middle of the room in a circle of American professors, talked for two hours without stopping or taking questions or exchanging so much as a hello with anyone present, and then, presumably talked out, just walked out—in anger. I never could figure out what that roomful of silent, astonished, but polite American academics could have done so to infuriate a man to whom no one had ever gotten to say a word. . . .

JACOB NEUSNER
Distinguished Research
Professor of Religious Studies
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for Allan Nadler's review of Yeshayahu Leibowitz's book on Jewish values. . . .

There are certain expressions and ideas of Leibowitz's which I admire and with which I agree—when he calls the Western Wall "God's discotheque," for example, or when he disputes the concept of "holy places"—not on the basis of modernism, but on the basis of *halakhah*. When he tells the ultra-Orthodox that if they make use of the benefits of modern medicine, they must also approve of autopsies, without which modern medicine is impossible, I agree. And I also agree when he suggests that a valid analogy may be drawn between the situation in ancient Israel, when it was permissible to offer sacrifices on the Sabbath because they represented a national function which took precedence over the Sabbath laws, and the situation today in Israel, when the functions of the police, the army, and utilities are also national needs that take priority over Sabbath laws.

But when he claims that the doctrine of the Messiah is not central to Orthodox Judaism, or that Maimonides did not really believe in that doctrine, I think he is copping out on the difficult position in which he has placed himself. On the one hand, he insists that no compromise with original Judaism

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is permissible, but, on the other hand, he tries to be consistent with his own predilection for rationalism and naturalism.

When he claims that the relationship between God and man is restricted to one-sided worship, an unquestioning fulfillment of duty which is totally devoid of utility for man, he is being not only cruel and unreasonable, but false to the Jewish sources themselves. The Torah and Talmud are full of references to the practical rewards of fulfilling specific commandments (*mitzvot*). . . .

I attended a philosophical conference at the University of Haifa in 1979 at which Leibowitz was the summarizer, and he did not cover his head with a *kippah*. So the question is: is the *kippah* part of *halakhah* or not? If it is, why did he not wear it in the company of his academic colleagues? And if it is not, why does he make a point of wearing it in the company of his religious colleagues? . . .

Leibowitz's opposition to all forms of non-Orthodox Judaism is particularly irritating in view of the fact that . . . in matters of basic conviction, as well as in his rationalism and naturalism and his contempt for superstition and meaningless ritual, he is much closer to Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist thinkers than he is to the Orthodox authorities in Israel or anywhere else in the Jewish world.

. . . Clothing himself in the mantle of Orthodoxy does not give Leibowitz the privilege of defaming Israel as a fascist state and calling those who disagree with him on religion falsifiers and hypocrites. . . .

[Rabbi] JACOB CHINITZ
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

ALLAN NADLER writes:

Although I agree with most of Rabbi Jacob Chinitz's observations regarding the problematics and inconsistencies which permeate Yeshayahu Leibowitz's theology, I question his concluding observation that Leibowitz is closer in his thinking to the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist movements than he is to Orthodoxy. Leibowitz's total banishment of ethics from the realm of religion makes him radically opposed to Reform Judaism. And his complete removal of Judaism from the state of human history renders his theology entirely inconsistent with the fundamental tenets of both Conservative and Reconstructionist Judaism.

As I stressed in my review, Leibowitz's system has no real precedent in Jewish thought. However, it is, in my opinion, closest to the religion of the most radical rabbinic opponents of Hasidism of the last century—the *Mitnagdim*. In the course of rejecting Hasidism's celebration of God's presence in all dimensions of earthly existence, the disciples of Elijah ben Solomon Zalman of Vilna (best known as the Vilna Gaon), went to the opposite extreme. These Lithuanian rabbis responded to Hasidism's immanentism by producing a theology of transcendence, which tended to divorce religion from life. (This theology is described in detail in my forthcoming book, *A Religion of Limits: The Religion of the Mitnagdim*, to be published later this year.) In fact, a disproportionately high number of Leibowitz's very limited sources for his theology come from the Lithuanian-*Mitnagdic* school.

Finally, as one whose own *kippah* is not surgically fused to his skull, I hesitate to join in Rabbi Chinitz's criticism of Leibowitz for baring his head in certain circumstances.

Pseudo-Science

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of *Rational Readings on Environmental Concerns*, edited by Jay Lehr [Books in Review, October 1992], Jeffrey Salmon cites a depressing number of instances of environmental pseudo-science. The problem, however, is of wider scope. Other fields of science are also being subjected to similar perversion for political purposes. For example:

• A leading scientific journal describes an experiment designed to establish the existence of global warming. A deep hole was drilled in the Greenland ice cap, and the ice was analyzed to see how much had been laid down each year. It was assumed that less ice had been laid down in recent years as compared with the preceding centuries, but in fact the reverse was found to be true—*more* ice is being laid down now. Did the authors of the experiment conclude that they had been mistaken, and that global warming had not occurred, or failing that, did they at least admit that the data were confusing, and no conclusion could be reached? No, they concluded that as the earth warmed, more water would evaporate from the oceans, and thus more snow would fall on Greenland. In other words, more ice forming every year supported the hypothesis that the earth was warming. Of course, if less ice had formed in recent years, this too would have supported the hypothesis. Thus the "scientists" could have saved themselves a lot of work by concluding that whatever the ice in Greenland showed, it would support global warming. They could have simply stayed home.

• A study in a leading medical journal finds that the suicide rate for ages fifteen to twenty-four is higher in Seattle than in Vancouver and attributes this to the stricter gun-control laws in Vancouver. The authors do not comment on the fact that the suicide rate for ages thirty-five to forty-four, however, is *higher* in Vancouver, and they certainly do not blame gun-control laws for this finding. A letter to the editor points out the discrepancy and notes that, using the authors' criteria, almost any result would support the hypothesis that gun-control laws are good, and almost no result could refute it. The letter is not published.

• An article in a leading medical journal calls for the removal of all lead from gasoline. A letter to the editor notes that when lead is removed, other chemicals are added to restore anti-knock properties, and points out that the adverse health effects of these chemicals should be studied. The authors of the article reply that this is the responsibility of the oil companies. Apparently they believe that doing "good" exempts them from any duty to foresee or even to monitor the results of their actions.

A hypothesis that cannot be refuted by any obtainable data is an irrational belief, not a scientific or logical conclusion. Anyone who believes he is right regardless of the evidence, and that being right absolves him from responsiblity for any harmful effects of his actions, is not a scientist, or even a rational person. That such persons and beliefs are shaping our national policies should be cause for grave concern.

DAVID C. STOLINSKY
Los Angeles, California

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JEFFREY SALMON writes:

David C. Stolinsky is correct to point out that the politicization of science goes well beyond the environmental area and should be a matter of great concern. It is hard to think of a policy issue today that is not in some way affected by developments in, and arguments about, science and technology. Yet, even as our dependence on science for law-making and regulatory policy increases, so too must our justified skepticism about the objectivity of the scientific community.

When a scientist misuses data for a political purpose, it is frequently only another scientist who can spot the deception. The scientific community must police itself, or all of us will suffer the consequences of corrupt science shaping the laws and economy under which we live.

The Sacred Executioner

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of my book, *Judas Iscariot: the Myth of Jewish Evil* [Books in Review, October 1992], Jon D. Levenson acknowledges that my thesis is correct in showing a strong link between the Judas myth and Christian anti-Semitism, but balks at the idea that Judaism contains no similar myth of salvific evil. He argues that the role played by Judah in the betrayal of Joseph is a Jewish analogue (and even possibly the source) of the Christian story of Judas Iscariot.

Some necessary distinctions are here ignored. To say that God can mold events in such a way that evil actions are followed by good consequences is very different from saying that God needs an evil action as the indispensable means of producing salvation. Moreover, in the story of Judah, human repentance plays an important role: the good consequences that flow from the crime of Joseph's brothers are inextricably bound up with their repentance. Judah betrays Joseph, but by risking his life for Benjamin, he redeems himself, and becomes reconciled with his former victim, Joseph. Similarly, Judah's descendant, David, sins with Bathsheba, yet founds with her a messianic dynasty. It is not his sin that produces this result, but his repentance. (In one version, Judas Iscariot repents, but his repentance has no influence on the course of salvation.) The repentant sinner, the Talmud tells us, is of higher status than the non-sinner; but this concept is worlds away from the idea that sin itself produces salvation. The fundamental difference is shown in the fact that, while Judas Iscariot becomes an outcast, Judah becomes a central figure in Jewish destiny. Thus the Jewish conception does not produce outcasts and could never produce an analogue to Christian anti-Semitism. This is quite apart from the obvious fact that the crime of selling Joseph does not have the human-sacrificial connotations of the myth of Judas's betrayal of Jesus to a violent death.

In arguing that I am guilty of "overdrawing the contrast between Judaism and Christianity," Mr. Levenson misrepresents the Talmud, which, he asserts, contains the doctrine that "there is no atonement without the shedding of blood." Significantly, Mr. Levenson gives no quotation to substantiate or even define his assertion. The phrase is biblical (ultimately Leviticus 17:11), but the talmudic view stems from its definition of "atonement." In the Talmud, sin-offerings are for unwitting sins only (b. Shabbat 70a). Deliberate sins have to be dealt with by repentance and reparation, and only then become liable to sin-offerings (having been thereby "turned into unwitting sins"). "Atonement" thus does not mean obliteration of sin, but reconciliation after unintended breaches with God. There are, of course, traces in the rabbinic literature of more primitive ideas (see Shalom Spiegel's *The Last Trial*). It is a great mistake, however, to elevate peripheral notions into central doctrines, as Mr. Levenson does in citing the legend that the death of the Ten Martyrs was an atonement for the selling of Joseph. This idea is not even rabbinic, but medieval.

Mr. Levenson's contention (which he seems to urge against me) that the anti-Semitism of Paul is not based on the Sacred Executioner is exactly what I argued myself in some detail in my book *Paul and Hellenism*, and is implied in my argument in the present book that the Judas Iscariot myth was unknown to Paul. Though he set the sacrificial myth in motion, Paul remained a basically gnostic thinker, regarding the Jews as opponents of the truth, rather than as God-killers. It was the Gospels that developed the full sacrificial myth, with the Jews and Judas performing the fated and necessary deed of blood. The fact urged against me by Mr. Levenson that the Gospels do not *explicitly* identify the Jews with Judas is fully recognized in my book. Such explicitness would be most uncharacteristic in a myth; and myth-exegetes would be unfairly handicapped if required to ignore the relevance of symbolic meanings and of later developments, which (as Lévi-Strauss pointed out) draw out the myth's hidden possibilities.

HYAM MACCOBY
London, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

According to Jon D. Levenson's review of *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*, Hyam Maccoby traces the Judas story

> through the canonical Gospels from Mark, the earliest, where no bounty is mentioned, to John, the latest, where the perfidious disciple has become the keeper of the common purse and an embezzler to boot.

Matthew's version is quite interesting because it gives Judas an entirely different motive:

> Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she had poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel should be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver [Matthew 26:6-15].

John, who tells the same story (12:1-8), informs us that it was Judas who said, "Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence, and

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given to the poor?" When we read the Matthew and John accounts together, we see that the disciple who was offended by Jesus' acceptance of the ointment was Judas, who then went out to betray Jesus before he knew what his monetary reward would be.

Mr. Levenson notes "that the pernicious identification of Judas with the Jews, though of high antiquity in Christian tradition, is not made in the New Testament itself." There is, however, a different verse linking the Jews with the death of Jesus: "His blood be upon us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). This terrible verse is a cross that Christianity—not Christendom—must bear.

GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ
New York City

JON D. LEVENSON writes:

Hyam Maccoby's letter is in some ways an improvement upon his book. Whereas he had written there that "[I]t is characteristic of Jewish religion that it refuses to accept ambivalence in an action," which must be "wholly right or wholly wrong," he now seems to acknowledge a narrative in the Torah in which a thoroughly culpable human act turns out to have been the divinely appointed means of deliverance. And whereas he had stated in the book that "animal sacrifice . . . lost its atoning significance in biblical and rabbinic thought," he now concedes that ancient Jewish sources, even rabbinic sources, were capable of deeming the shedding of blood in sacrifice as indispensable to atonement. (The talmudic statement that it is specifically through the blood that atonement is effected can be found in b. Zevachim 6a, b. Yoma 5a, and b. Menachot 93b.)

Regrettably, Mr. Maccoby's letter also provides further evidence of what I identified in the review as the fundamental weakness of his book on Judas Iscariot: a polemical tendency to overstate the differences between Judaism and Christianity and thus to do substantial injustice to both. This is conspicuous in Mr. Maccoby's present remarks on ancient Jewish teaching about repentance and atonement, wherein he altogether neglects the ideas of imputed merit, redemptive suffering, and vicarious atonement. If he really suspects the Jewish authenticity of such ideas, he need only check two books whose name he bears, Second and Fourth Maccabees. If he doubts that an influential talmudic rabbi could maintain that in some circumstances atonement is possible in the absence of repentance, he should begin with b. Shevuot 13a and b. Keritot 7a but not miss Sifre Deuteronomy 210, in which it is affirmed that the living can atone for the dead.

I hasten to add that I never asserted that Judaism contains "a myth of salvific evil," nor did I accept this as an adequate characterization of New Testament teaching in general or of Paul's theology in particular. Indeed, repentance (and not merely atonement) is prominent in some Christian scripture (e.g., Acts), and Paul insisted that improper behavior could cause the baptized to forfeit their redeemed status (e.g., First Corinthians 10:1-13)—a most unusual position if Paul were, as Mr. Maccoby supposes, "a basically gnostic thinker."

To do justice to the contrasts between Judaism and Christianity, one must reckon with the complexity and variety of each tradition and its historical development (including medieval developments) and resist the siren appeal of self-serving overgeneralizations and dualistic typologies. The irony of Hyam Maccoby's interesting and informative work is that his opposition to the classic dualistic theology of Gnosticism leads him into simplistic historical dualisms of his own.

The end of the passage that George Jochnowitz quotes demonstrates that Matthew does not ascribe "an entirely different motive" to Judas Iscariot from that of financial gain. Contrary to Mr. Jochnowitz's claim, there is no good reason to prefer John to Matthew on the question of whether it was only Judas or Jesus' disciples collectively who objected to the woman's anointing Jesus with the precious ointment. Finally, whereas Mr. Jochnowitz seems to think that I exonerated the New Testament from the charge of anti-Semitism, I actually wrote that "the disease [of Christian anti-Semitism] is as old as the New Testament itself and has lasted as long as the Christian tradition."

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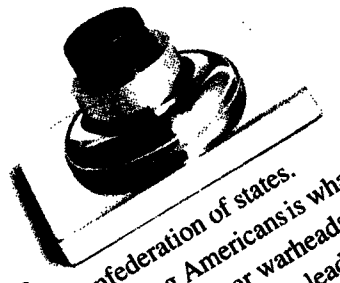

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Against the Independent Counsel

Robert H. Bork

For almost fifteen years America has experimented with a second and separate system of criminal-law enforcement. The Ethics in Government Act of 1978 created court-appointed independent counsels, placed outside the control of the President and the Attorney General, to investigate and, where possible, prosecute certain high-ranking executive-branch officials. Members of Congress and the judiciary were exempted. The statutory authorization for the Office of Independent Counsel expired this past December, but as a result of the pardons George Bush extended on Christmas Eve to six former officials involved in the Iran-*contra* affair, the chances that Congress and President Bill Clinton will revive the law seem to have increased. They should first study the record, which has been abominable.

The conventional wisdom, echoed on almost all editorial pages, holds that an independent counsel is essential because the Department of Justice cannot be trusted to prosecute miscreants in the executive branch. The conventional wisdom is wrong. The real effect and, to a large extent, the purpose of a special-prosecutor law has little to do with Department of Justice cover-ups.

"If the institution of the American presidency has grown enfeebled over the past two decades," Suzanne Garment of the American Enterprise Institute writes,

> it is not only because of battles with its opponents over policies or institutional prerogatives. Its adversaries have also waged a crucial and more or less continuous attack on the underlying moral legitimacy of the office, its occupants, and the President's allies in the executive branch.

A spearhead in the assault on the moral legitimacy, and hence the effectiveness, of the presidency has been the independent-counsel statute. The statute has helped tilt the balance between the executive and legislative branches and has, as a result of the prosecutorial incentives it created, produced savage injustices to individuals. All of this to cure a problem that does not exist.

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Two instances routinely cited as showing the need for an independent prosecutor are the Department of Justice's handling of the cases of Spiro Agnew and Richard Nixon. If those two examples do not withstand scrutiny, the argument for a new statute collapses, because there could hardly be greater tests of the Department's capacity than its handling of the wrongdoing of a President and a Vice President. As Solicitor General at the time, I participated in both matters and claim some knowledge of what took place.

In the summer of 1973, George Beall, the United States Attorney for Maryland, discovered that Spiro Agnew had taken bribes when Governor of Maryland and had continued to receive payments while Vice President. Beall informed Attorney General Elliot Richardson. There can be few more startling and unhappy messages for an Attorney General to receive, but Richardson informed President Nixon, had a grand jury investigate Agnew, and ultimately indicted him. After Agnew's attorneys and I exchanged briefs on the constitutionality of indicting him before he was removed from office by conviction on impeachment, he plea-bargained, confessed his guilt, and resigned the vice presidency.

Though the Department of Justice thus demonstrated that it could remove an incumbent Vice President, some critics apparently believe that Agnew was treated too leniently, that he should have been sent to prison. That option, however, was not available. The Watergate investigation was closing in on Richard Nixon, and Richardson thought it would be devastating to the nation if the President were defending an impeachment trial while the Vice President was a criminal defendant. Agnew used that as a bargaining chip and the deal was struck to be rid of him so that a new Vice President could be in office if Nixon should be impeached. That seemed to me then, and seems to me now, the only responsible course for Richardson to have taken.

The prime exhibit in the argument of those who want an independent counsel, however, is Watergate and what came to be called the Saturday Night Massacre. In fact, those episodes have been thoroughly misunderstood.

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The initial investigation of the break-in at the Watergate complex was conducted by Earl Silbert and his colleagues in the Office of the U. S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. The facts unearthed caused Silbert to order research on the constitutionality of indicting the President before he was removed from office by conviction on impeachment. He also issued a wide-ranging subpoena for White House documents. Silbert and his colleagues were ready to make the case against Nixon and his aides, but Elliot Richardson had just been nominated by Nixon for the post of Attorney General, and the Senate Judiciary Committee conditioned confirmation on Richardson's agreement to appoint a special prosecutor. Richardson chose his old law-school professor, Archibald Cox. Silbert gave Cox about 90 typewritten pages outlining the conspiracy and the evidence. More work remained to be done, but the essential outline of the case was there. Watergate would have played out about the way it did had the U.S. Attorney's Office been allowed to continue.

Though there was no need for a special prosecutor to deal with Watergate, it was politically inevitable that one would be named. But there might not have been a *further* demand for a special prosecutor removed from all executive-branch control had it not been for the Saturday Night Massacre (that is, Nixon's firing of Cox, together with the resignations it triggered). For almost 200 years, the public and Congress had been satisfied with what Terry Eastland of the Ethics and Public Policy Center calls the "politics of ethics."* The instruments of that politics included investigation and prosecution by the Department of Justice or by special prosecutors brought in for single occasions; congressional investigation; impeachment; clamor in the press; and, most effective, public reaction that determined the political future of those involved in wrongdoing.

The Cox firing changed all that. Although Cox was a man of integrity and ability, Richardson made a mistake in naming him special prosecutor. Nixon was immediately convinced that the investigation would be partisan because Cox was a long-time ally of Nixon's despised and feared political enemy, Senator Edward Kennedy. To compound matters, Cox made the politically maladroit move of taking the oath of office with the Kennedy family in attendance. The newspaper accounts and photographs of that event magnified White House paranoia.

Actually, Cox's behavior as special prosecutor did not warrant distrust. Any prosecutor, on learning of the existence of the tapes Nixon had secretly made, was bound to seek them, by subpoena if necessary. Cox did just that, and panic rolled over the White House. Richardson and the President's top defense lawyers attended a meeting in the office of Alexander Haig, Nixon's chief of staff, to decide what to do about the subpoena. The answer was in two parts. The first was to offer the "Stennis compromise." Senator John Stennis would listen to the subpoenaed tapes and produce a transcript from which national-security matters were deleted. The second part was to give Cox an order to seek no further tapes.

It is surprising that no one at the meeting realized this was a prescription for disaster. It should have been obvious that Cox could not accept either the compromise or the order. To do so would have been to betray his responsibilities. It should also have been clear that Richardson, given his commitment to the Senate Judiciary Committee, could not fire Cox for refusing the order. Apparently neither of these things was thought through, and once the order was given, the Saturday Night Massacre became inevitable.

Cox predictably refused and explained his decision on national television. Though Cox's decision was correct, Nixon now had to fire him: no President can afford to be faced down in public by a subordinate member of the executive branch. Richardson and the Deputy Attorney General would not carry out the firing and departed. I was the third and last in the line of succession established by Department regulations, and I discharged Cox. Had I not done so, the President would have named an Acting Attorney General from outside the Department who would have discharged Cox and perhaps his entire staff. That would have caused mass resignations in the Department of Justice. As it was, I explained the situation to the top officers of the Department and no one resigned.

WHATEVER the motivation behind the order to Cox, his firing had nothing to do with any attempt to stop the investigation. No one at the White House suggested that I interfere with the investigation in any way. When I met with Nixon after signing the letter removing Cox from office, the President understood that the investigation would continue and said only that he wanted "a prosecution, not a persecution." Cox's deputies and staff remained in place and, as they noted in their final report, did not miss a day's work.

It is partly my fault that the "firestorm," and hence the demand for a court-appointed prosecutor, followed. When I left the White House that night, I should have held a press conference to explain that only Cox was going and his staff would continue as before. That would have countered the impression that a coup was being attempted. I was new to Washington, however, and a press conference never crossed my mind, nor

* *Ethics, Politics, and the Independent Counsel: Executive Power, Executive Vice 1789-1989*, National Legal Center for the Public Interest (1989). This is the best scholarly analysis I know of concerning the great deficiencies of the independent-counsel system.

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did anyone suggest the idea. That mistake aside, however, the Department of Justice had nothing to apologize for in its handling of Watergate or the Saturday Night Massacre.

In the Nixon and Agnew cases, no one at the main Department of Justice or in the United States Attorneys' Offices was tempted to ignore the evidence in order to protect the President or the Vice President. It may be objected that the nation cannot rely upon always having persons of integrity in those positions. But anyone familiar with institutions such as the Department of Justice or a U.S. Attorney's Office will realize that there are other safeguards.

Let us suppose that in the Nixon or the Agnew affair either or both the U.S. Attorney and the Attorney General had been men of less exacting ethical standards. They would have found it impossible to suppress the evidence. High-ranking law-enforcement officials do not go about detecting crime on their own. Evidence is brought to them by others. The facts are known to lower-level prosecutors, FBI agents, often to a grand jury. These are people of professional integrity who also possess keen instincts of self-preservation. They will not be associated with a cover-up, and cannot afford to be. Nor need they have the courage to go public. They have connections with Congress, the press, and public-interest organizations. If an Attorney General had tried to protect Nixon or Agnew, that fact would have been leaked at once. The more spectacular a case is, the higher it reaches into the executive branch, the less willing is anybody to be connected in any way with a cover-up or even the suspicion of one.

Richard Nixon's presidency was doomed from the moment the investigation started, and it really did not matter whether the U.S. Attorney's Office, Cox, or his successor, Leon Jaworski, was in charge. The Watergate investigation could not have been avoided, and once started, it could not have been stopped. There is simply no danger that any criminal violation by a high-ranking official in the executive branch will be hidden by the Department of Justice. Though the fact has been overwhelmed by the mythology of Watergate and the Saturday Night Massacre, there is no case in our history in which the Department failed in its duty to prosecute executive-branch wrongdoing.*

That is one reason I testified to both the Senate and House Judiciary Committees in 1973, very shortly after the firing of Cox, that a mechanism for obtaining court-appointed special prosecutors was unnecessary as well as unconstitutional, and that I would therefore recommend to the President that he veto any bill seeking to establish such an office.

No bill was passed, and we escaped the predictable horrors of the institution, until Jimmy Carter became President and supported such a measure. Carter's Attorney General, Griffin Bell, understood the evil of the scheme but loyally backed his President. Since Carter left office, Bell, freed of his commitment, has consistently argued against the legislation.

The independent-counsel statute went through several versions but all versions displayed the features that make the law a recipe for irresponsibility, injustice, and the deformation of the constitutional balance between the legislative and executive branches.

In the Office of the Independent Counsel, Congress created, for the first time in our history, a federal prosecutor who is not really responsible to anyone. Under this statute, when the Attorney General receives allegations of criminal behavior by a high-ranking executive-branch official he must make an inquiry, but he is now deprived of most means of investigation. Unless, thus handicapped by the statute, he can determine that there are *no* reasonable grounds to believe that further investigation is warranted, he must ask the court to appoint an independent counsel. If a designated number of members of the Judiciary Committee of either House requests an independent counsel, the Attorney General must either agree or submit a report to Congress explaining his negative decision. In short, despite the Constitution's commitment of law enforcement to the President, he and his Attorney General are effectively stripped of that function in cases covered by the statute.

To make matters worse, when an independent counsel finishes his assignment, he must file a report with the court "setting forth fully and completely" a description of his work, the disposition of all cases brought, and his reasons for *not* prosecuting any matter. The court may then release the report, or such portions of it as it deems appropriate. No regular prosecutor would make public his reasons for not indicting, but the release of the special counsel's report can result in considerable embarrassment to the persons involved.

It is hardly surprising that such a statute is subject to abuse and that lawyers of great distinction have thought it unconstitutional. Thus, in the case of *Morrison* v. *Olson*, former Attorneys General Edward Levi, Griffin Bell, and William French Smith, who served, respectively, under Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan, submitted a brief *amicus curiae* asking the Supreme Court to invalidate the law. It is a great pity that the Court did not follow their recommendation.

Morrison v. *Olson* was a classic use of the independent-counsel statute to weaken the presidency by punishing an executive-branch official for carrying out his duties. A committee of the House

* Charges are being made that an exception to this rule is the BNL case. As yet, however, these charges are unproven.

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demanded files of cases the Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency were investigating or prosecuting. No law-enforcement officer could properly reveal that information. On the advice of the Department of Justice, President Reagan refused disclosure. The committee, enraged at this display of responsibility, asked the House Judiciary Committee to investigate the role of the Department in advising the President.

The Judiciary Committee subpoenaed all the memoranda prepared by Justice in advising the President and called Theodore Olson, the Assistant Attorney General responsible for giving legal advice to the Attorney General and the President. Some materials had been produced and a file search was continuing. Olson said he did not recall whether certain documents existed. Later they were found and produced to the committee.

Still, the committee was angered by Olson's forthright defense of the President's law-enforcement powers. On one occasion, the committee demanded any handwritten notes the Department's lawyers might have made in preparing their advice. Olson replied that he was sure the committee could arrange an exchange of those notes for the handwritten notes of the committee's staffers. One member rose, slammed the file down, and said that was the most outrageous remark he had ever heard.

The hearings were so inconsequential that they were not even published. But over two years later, the committee delivered a 3,100-page report accusing Olson of making false statements to Congress when—to cite one instance—he said he could not recall documents that were later produced. Alexia Morrison was appointed independent counsel and Olson's travails began.

Within six months, in seeking unsuccessfully to expand her jurisdiction to others, Morrison stated that, standing alone, Olson's testimony probably did not violate any criminal statute. Nevertheless, she took almost three years before she announced that there was no case against him.

In the course of these proceedings, Olson challenged a subpoena on the grounds that the independent-counsel statute was unconstitutional. He lost, but in upholding the constitutionality of the law, the Supreme Court created a number of constitutional anomalies that the Founders certainly never contemplated.

One of the most serious is to involve Congress in law enforcement directed at the executive branch. The Constitution protects members of Congress from executive-branch prosecution through the Speech and Debate Clause which makes them legally immune for anything said or written in the course of their duties. No such constitutional protection was thought necessary for the executive branch because it was given control of prosecutions. But now the Court has allowed prosecutions of the executive branch that are effectively initiated by Congress. That is not quite a bill of attainder, but it is a lot closer than the Constitution, properly interpreted, allows. The unfortunate outcome of *Morrison* v. *Olson* leaves the executive branch largely defenseless against this sort of assault. The power to pardon is one of the few shields the President has left.

Though Chief Justice Rehnquist's *Morrison* opinion was unpersuasive, only Justice Scalia dissented, so it is clear that hopes for the law's permanent demise rest not with the Court but with the wisdom and good will of Congress. Given the use Congress has made of the law in the past, the prospect is bleak.

IN ADDITION to everything else that is wrong with it, the institution of the independent counsel damages lives and reputations in ways that few regular prosecutors ever could or would. The human as well as the institutional costs are described rivetingly by Elliott Abrams in *Undue Process: A Story of How Political Differences Are Turned Into Crimes.**

When he left the State Department in 1989 after serving there in a variety of positions since 1981, Abrams intended to write a book, but this is not the one he planned. Abrams's last job at State was Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. Among his many duties was carrying out Ronald Reagan's policy of keeping the Nicaraguan *contras* a viable force against the Sandinistas. That involved him in two wars:

> a guerrilla war in Central America, and an almost equally violent political war about Central America between the Reagan administration and the Democratic-controlled Congress.

In the fall of 1986, the Iran-*contra* affair exploded and Abrams was called to testify before Congress, the Tower Commission, and a grand jury about the nature of U.S. support for the *contras*. An independent counsel, Lawrence Walsh, had also been appointed to investigate Iran-*contra*. He and his staff interviewed Abrams endlessly and took him before the grand jury three times. In early 1988, he was told that the Office of the Independent Counsel believed his statements, and he heard no more about the matter.

Until 1991. Taking into account everything else we now know about that Office, it seems too much of a coincidence that the prosecutors' interest in Abrams should have reawakened right after they lost the case against their most famous target, Oliver North, and when all indications were that they would also lose their other most important case—the one against John Poindexter. After all, they had no information about Abrams they had not had three-and-one-half years earlier.

The supposition that Walsh and his staff went after Abrams because they badly needed trophies

* Free Press, 243 pp., $22.95.

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to justify their existence is strengthened by the absurdity of the misdemeanor charges they leveled against him. The first was that he knew North had been encouraging a private supply network to support the *contras* when he, Abrams, had testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the United States government was not involved with that network. But there was never any secret about the fact of encouragement. Abrams thought he was talking about illegal operational involvement.

The second charge was that when asked by a House committee whether any foreign government was helping the *contras*, Abrams had said none was, although he knew that funds not yet delivered had been promised by the Sultan of Brunei (who had asked for, and received, pledges of absolute secrecy from our government). Subsequently he made the same denial to a Senate committee, but ten days later, feeling that the denial, while literally true, might have been a bit too close to the line, he went back and informed the Senate committee. The independent counsel charged him with withholding evidence from the House committee.

THE answers Abrams gave were not prepared in advance; they were spontaneous responses to hostile questioning. Five years later, equally hostile prosecutors scrutinized every nuance, like lawyers examining a stock prospectus, to see if something, anything, could be said to have been withheld. They had picked their man and had only to imagine a crime. Indeed, a former member of Walsh's team, Jeffrey Toobin, wrote a book disclosing the team's eagerness to prosecute Abrams and their disappointment that they had not found sufficient evidence. Walsh rejoined: "He [Toobin] missed his target. He was supposed to get Abrams. We hit the target after he left."

If the charges were based on prosecutorial hair-splitting, why did Abrams plead guilty to these two misdemeanor counts? There was the prospect of another two years of agony for himself, his wife, and his children and of an estimated $1 million in legal fees that would have drained his and his relatives' savings and left him in debt. But the greatest pressure was the threat that the independent counsel would file an indictment charging multiple felonies in the expectation that the jury would compromise by acquitting him of most but convicting him of one or two. That would mean time in prison as well as disbarment as an attorney.

Abrams was right to fear that outcome. Judge Learned Hand once said that above almost all things, he would dread having his fate in the hands of a jury. The misdemeanor pleas allowed Abrams and his family to resume their lives. It was an eminently sensible decision. Walsh's office offered Clair George, a high CIA officer, the misdemeanor route, George rejected it, was then indicted on seven felony counts, and ultimately convicted of two of them. Later, Walsh's office offered former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger the chance to plead guilty to a misdemeanor with no jail time, in return, according to Weinberger, for implicating Ronald Reagan. Weinberger rejected the offer and Walsh indicted him on five felony charges.

Of course, it is clear that Walsh and his staff wanted bigger game than Elliott Abrams. They repeatedly tried to get him to implicate an aide to George Bush, "trying [to] start something up that would end in impeaching the President." They were also eager to get former Secretary of State George Shultz. Walsh has now made it clear that his office is still trying to get Bush.

Weinberger's case was awaiting trial when Bush pardoned him, as well as George, Abrams, and three other former officials involved in Iran-*contra*. Angered at the escape of his prey, Walsh accused Bush of a "cover-up" and stated that the lame-duck President was a "subject" of investigation. These are remarks that would be highly inappropriate, and perhaps punishable under the code of professional ethics, if made by a regular prosecutor. They are no less so when flung out by an independent counsel.

Walsh's fury is not hard to understand. For, having set out to uncover a conspiracy, and to prosecute for real crimes, his office has ended up—after spending six years and $35 million—with a record that ranges from poor to disastrous, prosecuting people for not being sufficiently forthcoming. If they could add a former President or Secretary of State to their game bag, they seem to feel, at least something might be retrieved.

In the process, Walsh's prosecutorial team has behaved in ways more morally questionable than did their victims. Walsh's chief deputy, Craig Gillen, in writing to the probation officer who was preparing a recommendation to the judge who would sentence Abrams, both withheld information and made an allegation the prosecutors knew to be false. Not only did the letter give the impression that Abrams had initiated the idea of soliciting third countries for *contra* support—ignoring that President Reagan had made that decision and that Secretary Shultz had authorized every action taken; Gillen also said that Abrams went to London under an assumed name to meet the Sultan of Brunei's representative, when the prosecutors had numerous documents that showed he had traveled under his own name. As meticulous as Gillen and the others had been in analyzing every detail to "get" Abrams, it passes belief that this letter, designed to influence the sentence, could have been the result of an oversight.

THE lessons of Elliott Abrams's book are several. Some independent counsels have performed their tasks admirably. But

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the incentives the statute creates ensure that others will bring prosecutions that no regular prosecutor would bring, and that never should be brought. The independent counsel is set up with an unlimited budget to investigate one person or a small group of persons. The job, moreover, offers the chance to become a national figure, but only if scalps are taken. The independent-counsel statute, therefore, has built into it the certainty of pain and injustice to many innocent people. Abrams and his family are only one example.

The main problem, however, is that the independent counsel is accountable to no one. Four days before the 1992 presidential election, Walsh filed a second indictment of former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, which included a note suggesting that George Bush knew more about Iran-*contra* than he had admitted. The judge dismissed the new count as barred by the statute of limitations. The point of the charge was that Weinberger had kept notes he did not disclose and so it was wholly unnecessary to include that particular note. Moreover, the prosecutors can count as well as the judge, and their theory of why the new count was timely was implausible, so they must have known when they filed the indictment that the charge would likely be dismissed. Any regular prosecutor, accountable to a superior, would undoubtedly be called on the carpet, and probably discharged, for what looks remarkably like a partisan attempt to influence the outcome of a presidential election. So far as is known, no action is being taken against Walsh.

The independent-counsel law, however, has achieved its main objective: undermining the legitimacy and efficiency of the executive branch. Abrams, for example, advises officials of that branch to take no notes. Years later, you may not remember what certain phrases in your notes meant, but the independent counsel will be able to suggest sinister implications. Caspar Weinberger would probably give the same advice. Officials will undoubtedly be less energetic in asserting the President's interests and powers before Congress, even when they would be absolutely correct to do so. One wonders how resolute the next Theodore Olson will be.

EXCEPT for George Bush's pardons, Presidents themselves have been loath to stand up to the independent-counsel system. Abrams felt he was abandoned by Ronald Reagan and his administration. The State Department's lawyers may assist an official in an investigation of his official conduct until it is clear that he is targeted for indictment, but, at Walsh's insistence, those lawyers were ordered not to assist Abrams in connection with the independent counsel's inquiries even while Abrams was an Assistant Secretary and not targeted. It is not surprising that he speaks contemptuously of "Reagan-administration officials who had gone on to their glory and had left me and a few others out there on the beach to take the incoming fire." It has been observed before that the Reagan administration demanded loyalty up but did not practice loyalty down. The question is not merely one of loyalty to subordinates and behaving honorably oneself; by cutting the lifelines to people like Abrams, the Reagan administration made it likely that future Presidents will get less loyalty up and more subordinates whose primary concern is their own skins.

The subtitle of Abrams's book alleges that political differences were turned into crimes. It is difficult to disagree. The charges against him were for statements of a kind that had never before been made criminal. Abrams's real offense was battling for Reagan's policies against a Congress that kept changing its attitudes but often favored the Sandinistas over the *contras*. Worse, he was intelligent, tough, and self-confident—qualities which, though they annoy some Congressmen, are not usually regarded as criminal. As the Abrams, Olson, and Weinberger cases show, in operation the independent-counsel statute has criminalized political differences, but the only "criminals" it has turned up have been, as Congress intended, in the executive branch. If the law is reenacted, that will not be because Congress has not understood what it has seen; it will be because Congress likes what it has seen.

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The Bitter Legacies of Malcolm X

Tamar Jacoby

NO ONE has ever accused the black filmmaker Spike Lee of being unambitious, but in the case of his new movie, *Malcolm X*, it is not clear that the director himself grasped the dimensions of the project he was taking on. Plainly enough, in making this film, he would have to capture on screen one of the largest and least scrutable characters in the nation's recent history. Plainly, too, he would have to recreate an era: the fascination, forever faded now, of Harlem in its pre-1960's heyday. Along with these creative tasks there were problems of interpretation, none harder than deciding how to balance the many phases of his hero's life. Hustler, prisoner, Black Muslim, militant, uncertain pilgrim, and martyr: a full portrait would have to touch at least on each of these many Malcolms.

All of this Spike Lee understood and took on with apparent relish, just as he also surely understood that he would have to make some sense of Malcolm X's legacy. What he does not seem to have grasped was just how big a task that is.

LIKE the character in Molière who discovers that he has been talking prose all his life, for decades now, without knowing it, most Americans have been seeing the world in Malcolm X's terms. That American society is inherently racist; that skin color equals identity; that blacks form a community apart; that they are at least as African as American; that their rage is legitimate, and that only good can come of expressing it—all this and more came into the conventional wisdom by way of Malcolm X. He did not invent most of these ideas, and he did not create the rage he tapped into. But by giving voice to this message just when and how he did, he changed forever the racial consciousness of both blacks and whites.

His influence was so far-reaching that it is sometimes hard to spot. Who today can remember what it was like, in the early 60's, when most Americans still imagined that race was a soluble problem, or that underneath, color aside, blacks and whites were fundamentally the same? It is often thought that Malcolm X's legacy serves as a counterpoint to that of Martin Luther King, Jr., but already in the late 1960's the black nationalist's views had obliterated the vision of the civil-rights leader.

Brilliant publicist that he is (indeed, that is where his real talent lies), not even Spike Lee could have engineered the Malcolm-mania now sweeping the nation. The hats, the T-shirts, the rap lyrics, the ghetto graffiti, the countless essays—high culture or low, what all these artifacts share is the shock of recognition. Twenty-five years after the fact, Americans are acknowledging Malcolm X's victory. Among many celebrations, *Malcolm X* the movie is merely the flashiest.

It is also a big letdown, both as entertainment and as politics. Often visually stunning and fun to listen to—the soundtrack includes dozens of lavishly rendered jazz and soul numbers—as a whole *Malcolm X* is leaden and painfully didactic. Its most serious failing becomes evident within moments into its three-plus hours, even before the first taste of oversimplified racial politics. The error is one of style and pace: determined to produce an epic, Lee has overwhelmed his subject, substituting costumes, crowd scenes, and fancy undercutting for virtually all real human drama.

The movie has been compared with the work of the British director David Lean (of *Lawrence of Arabia* fame), but the comparison is no compliment today; in the age of MTV, and given all that has happened in Hollywood since the 50's, Lean-like grandeur is hardly exciting to most moviegoers. The film is too big, too slow, too staged, too artificial—too heroic. Lee has taken all the thrill out of Harlem and black Boston, all the grit and all the danger. The streets where young Malcolm Little hustled and pimped are bathed in a fake golden light; the barbershop where he "processed" his hair looks like a Norman Rockwell painting; even the charged atmosphere of his favorite ballroom hang-out, with all its sweat and sexual excitement, is reduced to a 1930's Hollywood dance number.

The movie's heavy-handed racial politics only make matter worse. In this, as in everything, Lee follows Malcolm X's *Autobiography*, a myth-building rewrite of the past that the film simplifies still further. All whites in Malcolm's life are sinister; all blacks are righteous victims. His heroic father battles the Klan; his mother is beaten down by

TAMAR JACOBY, here making her first appearance in COMMENTARY, is working on a book about the recent history of race relations in America.

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insurance men and social workers. Malcolm's descent into vice and crime is seen entirely as the white man's fault. Lee accepts all this at face value, though much of it is known to be false. (Malcolm's own mother has denied that the family was a victim of Klan harassment, and research suggests his father was himself responsible for much of the violence in his life that Malcolm attributed to whites.)

Even Lee seems to know that he has to cut Malcolm's moralizing with something; but he does not seem to know with what. The result is an incongruous mix of racially tendentious flashbacks, blaring good-time jazz, and slapstick gags about life as a hustler. By the time the first third of the film is done—it ends as Malcolm is caught and sent to prison—viewers are hungry for substance. Few will be satisfied by the next hour-and-a-half: a fairly complete course in Black Muslim ideology and history, delivered first in bone-dry lectures from a fellow prison inmate, and, then, when Malcolm is released, in his own speeches as a Muslim minister.

Least successful of all is the film's portrayal of its hero. Handsome, charming, tightly wound, and by all accounts utterly galvanizing, the real Malcolm X was one of the most dynamic figures in recent American public life. Virtually every black memoir from the period recalls the electrifying effect he had on listeners, including moderates who found the substance of his Muslim views ridiculous. He once held a crowd of 15,000 Harlemites spellbound for four hours. A generation of young blacks could quote his speeches verbatim, and long before most white politicians knew how to use the media, Malcolm had a passionate affair with the TV camera.

As played by Denzel Washington, Malcolm X has none of this edge or power. Washington is an engaging actor, and he has pulled off a fair impersonation of his subject: the physical gestures, at least, and the voice are right. But the on-screen Malcolm is finally too much the affable puppy dog, without any of the mystery, the trickster charm, or the smoldering anger of the original.

OF ALL the reasons for the movie's failure, none is more telling than Spike Lee's determination to send a message to his viewers—young black viewers in particular. Lee is hardly coy about his aspirations to racial leadership. "Presently in America," he has written, "a war is being fought . . . [and] in this war, it's gonna come down to the artist." His considerable talent for public relations has helped him build a base among black youth; his following outstrips that of most conventional leaders, either elected officials or demagogic free-lance activists. Clearly enough, Lee saw the Malcolm X story as a way to play to this young base, at once appealing to its sympathies and instructing it with a didactic moral. Hence the movie's air of unreality—this is not real life, it is legend; its failure to capture Malcolm the man; and its endless speechifying.

But what *is* the moral? As in the past with Spike Lee, one cannot be quite sure. Which side is he on, for example, in the great debate between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.? The unreconcilable quotations from the two men that scrolled down the screen at the end of his earlier movie, *Do the Right Thing*, left viewers utterly confused. The new film is clearer: King is shown near the end, looking stiff and embarrassed even on the day in 1965 when Malcolm X is assassinated. But the new movie also raises a host of new questions. Does Lee endorse Malcolm X's Muslim teachings; the secular nationalism he preached after he left the Muslims; or the half-baked peace offering he made to white America just before he was killed?

Once again, no matter how carefully one looks, one cannot be sure. All three visions are presented at length and without a trace of irony. As in his writings and in interviews, Lee seems to want to have it all ways, to look just "bad" enough to appeal to blacks but also reasonable enough not to repel white moviegoers. Putting a new spin on an old ghetto tradition, he wants at once to shock whites and to win their film prizes.

These two-sided stances sometimes seem incoherent, at other times grossly irresponsible. Lee has talked and written a great deal about Malcolm X's emphasis on education—yet when the film came out, he urged young blacks to skip school to see it. At the very end of the movie, the South African black leader Nelson Mandela appears out of nowhere to repeat Malcolm's notorious phrase, "by any means necessary." This seems rather forced—until one reads Lee's explanation. As he told an interviewer:

> Black South Africans are gonna have to kill people. . . . "One bullet, one settler." It's gonna come to that. I'll be rejoicing. Who knows? We might see the same tactic here some day.

It is impossible to know if Lee really means this; like Malcolm X before him, he plainly delights in frightening whitey. At the same time, trapped as he is in the currently orthodox black views about race, much of what he says seems too trite even to argue with. Who can be surprised when he suggests that the FBI helped kill Malcolm X? Who expects him to denounce black anti-Semitism, to criticize anyone or anything black? Of course he cheered the riots in Los Angeles last spring; of course he thinks the police are pigs. This is a credo, to be accepted on faith. Lee is too much the spiritual son of Malcolm X to stand outside the older man's legacy and assess it for what it is.

THERE has never been much disagreement, either in the 60's or today, about why Malcolm X is so beloved among black

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people. "He stood up to the white man and he had dignity doing it," a young black recently told a *New York Times* reporter. "He didn't take no mess." Louis Farrakhan, a one-time disciple, explains the appeal almost in the same terms: "I never heard any black man speak in the manner that I heard him speak, with the boldness."

It is not just that Malcolm X preached dignity, although of course he did, unrelentingly. Just as important was the way he lived his life. He looked whites in the eye; he said exactly what was on his mind. To blacks, he seemed to take the fear out of encounters with white people. He refused, as he said, to "cringe" or "beg"—and by the force of his example, he taught black youth that they did not have to, either.

For most blacks who heard him, the appeal was immediate and intense—like a shot of good whiskey, one man wrote after hearing Malcolm speak. A far more moderate black leader, James Farmer of CORE, recalled later what it was like to organize in Harlem in the early 60's: no matter what you did, you were always trailing behind Malcolm, trying desperately to catch the ear of youth who had been galvanized by that boldness.

Dignity, pride, self-respect: it sounds benign enough, so much so that it is hard to imagine anyone, then or now, begrudging it to black people. True, the dignity came with some swagger, with a righteous anger and some loose threats. Malcolm made no secret of his commitment to what he called "non-nonviolence." That was a key part of his boldness and his refusal to be too accommodating to white people: to accept what was called their "monopoly on force" or ease their fears of black retaliation for past abuses. In truth, it may or may not matter that Malcolm himself was never implicated in any violence, that he saw no gunplay at all until the hail of bullets that ended his life; any assessment of his legacy must ask what his followers made of his threatening talk.

But the hard questions about what Malcolm left behind go deeper than that. What *kind* of dignity was he selling? What exactly was it based on, and where did it lead? Did he point the way toward real self-esteem, or just the quick fix of defiance? Was he, in short, a true national leader, or a small-time tough who puffed his people up with false bravado?

Nationalism was an old idea by the time Malcolm X arrived in Harlem in the early 50's. Marcus Garvey and many before him had dreamed of taking black men back to Africa; the Communist party and the Black Muslims had imagined a black state within America. Malcolm helped the Muslims prepare the ground for this separate nation, expanding their following from 400 to perhaps 40,000. The new numbers made it possible to build an infrastructure: not just the church but also an army (the Fruit of Islam) and an economic network (an array of industries, service businesses, restaurants, and bookstores). Malcolm was the chief recruiter and de-facto foreign minister, representing the Nation of Islam to America at large. Part of what he added was simply flair: youth, drama, a sense of style, and the charisma that grows from pure conviction. But he also brought a new dimension—a personal one—that gave the Muslim faith its resonance for a generation of young blacks.

Malcolm's true genius lay in his psychological insight: his understanding that at bottom the race problem was largely internal. He looked around the ghetto and saw omnipresent self-hatred—hatred learned from whites and based on nagging color consciousness. "Negro men and women," he wrote, have been "brainwashed into believing that the black people are 'inferior.'" They could never forget that they were black, nor could they ever ease their alienation from the white world. Malcolm X and the Muslims, instead of telling followers to suppress this painful sense of difference, urged them to turn it upside down: to convert it from shame to pride. Glory in your blackness, he said. Cultivate your sense of difference. Not only that: know that it makes you better than the white man.

It was a brilliant stroke of jiujitsu, a quasi-Freudian alchemy. And at first blush, it seemed to work. It took only a few words, a few key concepts: the change from "Negro" to "black" and the famous slogan, "The white man is the devil." It was as if by magic, overnight, countless blacks turned their world inside out, training their hatred away from themselves and toward white society.

Some of Malcolm X's admirers, blacks as well as whites, have suggested that the two halves of his proposition are separable: that blacks can find self-love without descending into hatred for the white man. In truth, for Malcolm X and most of his followers, the two came inextricably together. As on a seesaw, black could be up only if white were down. This, Malcolm said, was a truth handed down by history, forever inescapable: blacks simply would not feel like men until they could defy whites. Black pride meant black resistance, rebellion, unrestrained and unembarrassed anger. To be polite or acquiescent was to degrade oneself before "the enemy." To compromise was to "sell out"; to "turn the other cheek" was humiliation.

Malcolm gloried in his own venom as if it indeed made him stronger, cheering when a plane of white passengers crashed and, famously, when the white President, John F. Kennedy, was assassinated. He used to say that white people stank, and compared them to the lowest animals—all of this both before and after his famous visit to Mecca in 1964. It has often been suggested that during that trip he moderated his malign views of white people; in fact, he conceded only that there might be a few exceptions to the general rule that whites were the black man's implacable foe.

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A GENERATION of younger militants and then their children took Malcolm as a model. Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and Amiri Baraka were the first. Black Power and Black Consciousness were some of the names they gave their doctrine. Like Malcolm X before them, these young men embraced their rage and proudly allowed it to define them: it was the foundation of their sense of self. At first, in the late 60's, this seemed a mere idea, an optional political philosophy. By the mid-70's, it was hard to find a black who questioned the notion, or even recognized it as a view chosen from among several competing possibilities. Black skin was no longer a physical characteristic; it was an all-empowering identity, and by definition it pitted you against the rest of society.

The true consequences of the idea took some time to become clear. In the 1960's, black rage scared white people. Revolution, bloodshed, even angry racial accusations seemed to threaten more disruption than white America could bear. Thirty years later, with many long hot summers and a lot of name-calling behind them, whites have more or less learned to live with open black hatred. Today the threat looks different. The question is whether *blacks* can survive black alienation—or whether their rage at white society has cut them off from opportunities, poisoning their own lives and their children's future. The black youth who declines to try at school because this would be "acting white," the black professional woman whose mistrust prevents her from getting to know her white colleagues, the middle-class black writer who still today justifies riots as "understandable": all are playing out the legacy that Malcolm X left his people, and it is not hard to see just whom they are hurting the most.

Three decades later, many blacks also still seem to feel sadly short on dignity. Malcolm provided a shot in the arm when he replaced the word "Negro" with "black." Not very long afterward, the name had to be changed again—and it still did not work the desired internal transformation. Now Malcolm's own name is being called upon: yet another magic password. Black youths grab at these flimsy solutions, one after the other. We wear the X, one young woman told a journalist poignantly, because it makes us feel "proud to be African-American."

The need for continual boosters seems to run particularly strong among young people who have made it into the white world; the more they mingle with whites, the thinner their black identity, and so they reach out desperately to prove it—by proving their militancy. Joe Wood, a young black writer for the *Village Voice* who attended high school and college with whites, describes the lift he got from wearing a shirt with Malcolm's picture on it: "I was telling everyone what seemed obvious—I am black. . . . Wearing that T-shirt made me feel 'real' black, lean and competitive." Magic names, asserted identities, the religion of skin color, a sense of self derived from racial politics and look-alike role models: Malcolm's prescriptions are more popular than ever today, and still with every passing year the hunger for dignity grows more acute.

AS IS well known, Malcolm was a confused man when he died: cut off from the Muslims by a dispute with their leader Elijah Muhammad, searching for a political program, surrounded by a mere handful of followers waiting to hear how his views would evolve. The picture is factually accurate, but it is also misleading, suggesting as it does that Malcolm never really went beyond the Muslims or the broader tradition of black nationalism stemming from Marcus Garvey. In fact, unlike Garvey and the Muslims, who dreamed of creating a black nation apart, Malcolm came to believe that blacks did not need a distinct political entity. They already lived in a realm apart; all they had to do was take control of that separate universe.

With this, Malcolm forever redefined not just black nationalism but also the black role in American politics and society. Already in the early 60's he suggested that blacks should vote on principle for blacks, that they should run the businesses and other institutions in the ghetto, that they should strive for an "Afrocentric" culture apart and shun too much connection with the mainstream. These ideas, too, were meant to convey dignity, a sense of autonomy and power. In fact, as the last 25 years prove, they have made mostly for isolation, alienation feeding on alienation.

True, racial politics have proved empowering, but only for a small number of community leaders who by nature thrive on nourishing a sense of grievance among their followers. In most cities, black control of black institutions has meant precious little. In others, that idea has justified boycotting stores owned by non-black merchants—boycotts that in the end only hurt ordinary black people. In realm after realm, blacks put racial solidarity before all other concerns: before solving social problems, advancing in the mainstream, meeting their individual needs, or having an honest debate among themselves about what would really be best for their people. The tyranny of Malcolm X's legacy is everywhere evident in the black community, and yet, in the name of solidarity, virtually no one dares suggest that it may have been a sadly misleading distraction: a recipe for stagnation and empty bitterness.

What about more conventional paths to self-respect: purpose, discipline, accomplishment? Certainly, Malcolm X preached these too, and he embodied them in his own life, teaching himself to read and speak, transforming himself from hustler to national hero. Spike Lee is not the first of his admirers to dwell on this strain of his message, and even today, the Muslims get deserved

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credit for their insistence on backbone and self-help. The trouble is that what Malcolm gave with one hand, he took away with the other—by deriding so many of the avenues on which young blacks would be likely to advance.

Disciplined as he was himself and keen on education, he overlooked how his obsessively color-coded world view would work to contradict his own example. He taught plainly and proudly that it was humiliating to submit to white authority—white teachers, white bosses, white society's ways of doing things. He warned his followers not to rely on "the enemy" for jobs, in effect not to participate in the white economy. He told blacks they were not Americans—that this was not their house and, like field slaves, they should feel pleased when it burned down. Malcolm did not use the phrase, now common in the ghetto, to "act white," but more than any black leader before or since, he suggested that to do well by conventional standards was indeed to give in to the enemy—and that it was something black people should avoid at all costs. More dangerous still, by glorifying hatred and defiance, he encouraged young blacks to trash the society around them, even if that meant breaking the windows of the house where they themselves lived.

Most damaging in the long run, and most undermining for black people, was Malcolm X's conviction that America could never heal itself. Even after he left the Muslims, he scorned the civil-rights movement. Even after his trip to Mecca, he remained convinced that American society was irredeemably racist. He derided the changes of the early 60's—the historic quickening of white conscience and the legislation it provoked—as so much hypocrisy, certain to come to nothing. "You fool me, and I fool you," he once said with a short, hard laugh. "You pretend that you're my brother and I pretend that I really believe you believe you're my brother." He was right that racial mistrust went deep, and would prove difficult to root out. Yet he instructed one sibling not to take the other's good faith seriously, that to work for change made one a chump, and that even to hope for change was a form of enslavement. By telling young blacks that things would never change, in effect he blocked real change forever.

Ultimately, of course, it is too easy to blame Malcolm. To deplore his influence today will do about as much to change things as the invocation of "X" will do to help ghetto youths find themselves. It is tempting to fantasize that if he had lived longer, he would eventually have moved on to other, better answers, a more constructive path to a deeper and more authentic dignity. Perhaps so. But the fantasy only reminds one how sad and desperate is today's drive to beatify the old Malcolm X. Almost 30 years after his death, much of black America is still looking for pride and self-worth in the dead-end notion of defiance for defiance's sake. In the early 60's this seemed like a shot of good, strong whiskey; today it has become a deadening, and deadly, drug.

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What the Holocaust Does *Not* Teach

Edward Alexander

"World Jewry has a special responsibility." This hectoring call blared forth from the midst of a *New York Times* op-ed piece by Flora Lewis entitled "Save Lives in Bosnia" (November 9, 1992). Jews, she argued, have acquired their special responsibility because of the Holocaust; having experienced so much persecution, now they have both the opportunity and the obligation "to show that concentration camps provoke the solidarity of victims of persecution." She went on to give specific instructions to Jews to offer refuge in Israel to Bosnian Muslims, in order to demonstrate "that the Jewish state does indeed want to get on in peace with its Muslim neighbors."

If this seems a peculiarly perverse lesson to extract from the Holocaust—its unstated corollary (as Conor Cruise O'Brien once pointed out in a different context) is that the descendants of people who have *not* been persecuted have no special responsibility to behave particularly well—it is sobriety itself when compared with some that have been expounded by even more nimble interpreters than Flora Lewis. In Israel, one of the few places in the world where the "special responsibility" of Jews is discussed more frequently than in the editorial pages of the *New York Times*, the new Minister of Education, Shulamit Aloni, has taken it upon herself to reverse the direction of that country's study and commemoration of the Holocaust.

A generation ago, Israel's most eminent writers, from Uri Zvi Greenberg on the Right to Abba Kovner on the Left, exhorted their countrymen to reflect upon the Nazi murder of European Jewry and the callous indifference of the nations of the world to the Jewish catastrophe, and to consider their responsibility to redeem the dead. The great historian of Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem, justified choosing the Star of David for the Israeli flag precisely because

> under this sign [the Jews] were murdered, [and] the sign which . . . has been sanctified by suffering and dread has become worthy of illuminating the path to life and reconstruction.

But Mrs. Aloni has deplored the stress upon the Holocaust as regressive and nationalistic. "I do not take pictures of the backside of history," she declared on Israel Radio. Even before her elevation to office, Mrs. Aloni had frequently denounced Holocaust education in Israel because it taught children that "the Nazis did this to the Jews instead of the message that people did this to people." If Mrs. Aloni has her way, the Nazi murder of the Jews of Europe, a crime of terrifying clarity and distinctness, will become for young Israelis a blurred, amorphous agony, an indeterminate part of man's inhumanity to man.

What *do* we learn from the Holocaust? In her posthumously published collection of essays, *What Is the Use of Jewish History?*[1] (gathered from the last decade of her life, and many of them first published in Commentary), the distinguished historian Lucy S. Dawidowicz returns frequently to this question, most notably in "How They Teach the Holocaust" and "Could America Have Rescued Europe's Jews?"

The former, an analysis of Holocaust curricula, shows that some American secondary schools have already achieved the condition to which Shulamit Aloni would have Israeli schools aspire. Thus, one curriculum uses excerpts from *Mein Kampf* not just to suggest, misleadingly, that "racist hatred extends to all groups that are 'others,'" but to give the impression that blacks and not Jews were Hitler's primary targets. The most pervasive failure of these curricula, Mrs. Dawidowicz writes, is their omission of the long history of anti-Semitism, with the term itself generally subsumed under the generic "racism" or "prejudice."

Mrs. Dawidowicz never doubted that we study the murder of the European Jews not only to mourn and remember, but to try to understand and learn. Yet the past cannot instruct those who ask the wrong questions. The sharpness of her attack on the historian David Wyman, who in *The Abandonment of the Jews* asked why America failed to rescue the European Jews, arose not so much from a desire to defend President Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Jewry from allegations

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[1] Edited and with an Introduction by Neal Kozodoy, Schocken, 278 pp., $27.50.

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of complicity in the Holocaust as from a flinty political realism. Not for her the imagined "otherwise" of what she derisively labeled "preaching history," the making of moral judgments on the basis of the *ought* rather than the *is* of history.

The real question to ask, Mrs. Dawidowicz insisted, was not "Could America Have Rescued Europe's Jews?" but how the country called Nazi Germany so quickly gained dominion over Europe and readily enlisted both its own citizens and other peoples to participate in the mass murder of Jews. A judicious examination of *this* question, she asserted, would suggest the true lessons to be learned from the Holocaust. The first such lesson was the infectious power of anti-Semitism, especially when embodied in the state. The second was the importance of a strong countervailing military force—for if the pacifists, appeasers, and isolationists of the 1920's and 1930's had not had their way in England and America, Hitler would not have had his way in Europe. The third, "one which every Jewish child now knows," was the necessity of Jewish political power and a Jewish state for Jewish survival.

Those who reject these lessons have a vested interest in opposing the study of the Holocaust or in distorting its history. Given Shulamit Aloni's insistence that it was not the Nazis who murdered the Jews but "people [who] did this to people," it would not have surprised Mrs. Dawidowicz (or, for that matter, Gershom Scholem) to learn that Aloni has also blamed Jews for arousing anti-Semitism in present-day Poland by displaying the flag of the Jewish state at Auschwitz and for other Holocaust-related activities "which create the feeling that we were victims and that we have to be strong." Apparently, the wisdom Mrs. Dawidowicz attributed to every Jewish child has not yet reached every Jewish adult.

2.

In the high-school Holocaust curricula she studied, Mrs. Dawidowicz observed that one frequently-taught lesson centers on the theme of moral choice: obedience to authority vs. following the dictates of one's own conscience. Exhorting students to beware the consequences of the former, the curricula invoke the examples of Adolf Eichmann, who pleaded "superior orders" at his 1961 trial in Jerusalem, and Lt. William L. Calley, who did the same at his court-martial for the killing of unarmed Vietnamese civilians at My Lai in 1968. Mrs. Dawidowicz is properly critical of the glib dichotomization suggested by this choice, and especially of the idea that following the dictates of one's conscience, without reference to morality or justice, is always and everywhere to be preferred to obedience to authority. In any case, she points out, in the Holocaust the issue was not obedience to authority but obedience to specific *orders*.

Nazi criminals claimed after the war that they could not disobey such orders without risking the penalty of execution or imprisonment. Now the historian Christopher R. Browning in *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*[2] has definitively demonstrated the meretriciousness of such claims. He writes:

> In the past 45 years, no defense attorney or defendant in any of the hundreds of postwar trials has been able to document a single case in which refusal to obey an order to kill unarmed civilians resulted in the allegedly inevitable dire punishment.

Browning's luminously intelligent and finely written book is based on the investigation and prosecution—conducted between 1962 and 1972 by the office of the state prosecutor in Hamburg—of 210 of the nearly 500 men in Reserve Police Battalion 101. This unit had been sent to Poland in June 1942 to murder Jews living in cities smaller than Warsaw or Lodz. Its members, too old for the German army, were middle-aged family men of working- and lower-middle-class background from the city of Hamburg. They were also "ordinary" in that few had had prior military service, only five were members of the Nazi party, and none was an SS member. Ranging in age between thirty-three and forty-eight, all had been molded in the pre-Nazi era, and all were from a social milieu which, according to Browning, had been anti-Nazi in its political culture.

Despite all this, however, these "ordinary men," who "would not seem to have been a very promising group from which to recruit mass murderers on behalf of the Nazi vision of a racial utopia free of Jews," did very well indeed in their extraordinary task. Before they were finished, in May 1943, they had murdered at least 38,000 Jews and sent another 45,000 to their deaths in Treblinka.

They began their work in July 1942 in the Polish village of Jozefow, about 30 kilometers south and east of Bilgoraj. There they were ordered to round up 1,800 Jews and, after separating the males of working age for shipment to a camp, to murder all women, children, and elderly people. To help them accomplish this task, the battalion's doctor gave medical instruction in how to administer a clean or surgical "neck shot" to the victims. Before the police embarked on their work, however, their commander, Major Wilhelm Trapp, "made an extraordinary offer: if any of the older men among them did not feel up to the task that lay before him, he could step out."

Only twelve members of Battalion 101 availed themselves of the opportunity to drop out of the firing squad at once. Others, who found shooting helpless Jews a nasty, unbearable piece of work—having failed to master the technique of the "neck

[2] HarperCollins, 231 pp., $22.00.

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shot," they spattered themselves with the blood and brains of their victims—quit early in the slaughter; still others, after they had murdered ten or twenty Jews. Ultimately, or so Browning concludes from the (no doubt self-serving) postwar testimony of the policemen, between 10 and 20 percent of those assigned to the firing squads sought release or evaded the shooting by more surreptitious methods.

After the Jozefow massacre, Major Trapp faced the problem of widespread demoralization both in his willing killers and in his shirkers and evaders. Therefore, two changes were introduced in most (but not all) of the battalion's subsequent operations. Henceforth, they would involve ghetto clearing and deportation rather than outright murder; and deportations would be undertaken jointly by Battalion 101 and the Trawnikis, the SS-trained auxiliaries from the Soviet territories. This division of labor proved an effective psychological anodyne. Most killing was removed to the death camps, with the worst "on the spot" murders done by the Trawnikis.

At every stage, Browning stresses, the police had a considerable degree of choice about joining the killing squads. To some extent, this latitude was a function of the eagerness with which many Germans participated in hunting down and killing Jews. One policeman recalled how "often there were so many volunteers that some of them had to be turned away." Another policeman remembered that musicians and performers in a visiting entertainment unit of Berlin police "asked, indeed even emphatically begged, to be allowed to participate in the execution of the Jews." This surfeit of killers may explain why even Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, while extolling obedience in general, could (in a notorious speech of 1943 stressing that "the Jews shall . . . one day disappear in accordance with the wish of the Fuehrer") express leniency toward the individual SS man "whose nerves are finished, one who is weak. Then one can say: Good, go take your pension."

WHAT, then, given the relative ease with which one could evade this duty, led some of the policemen to cease shooting, and what led the rest to continue? Browning notes that even 20 or 25 years after the events of 1942-43, those who opted out of the firing squads were still citing sheer physical revulsion as their prime motive, "but did not express any ethical or political principles behind this revulsion." In Browning's view, this does not mean that such principles had atrophied: "Given the educational level of these reserve policemen, one should not expect a sophisticated articulation of abstract principles."

It is possible, however, that Browning is being too charitable here: everyone, after all, can know the difference between a just and a wicked action without reference to "a sophisticated articulation of abstract principles." If Browning is willing to believe the testimony of the policemen who evaded the shooting, why should he doubt them when they cite nausea or nerves or colitis as their reason? Most of the evidence he presents suggests that diseases of the liver had more sway than the terrors of conscience over the small number of non-"shooters."

And what moved the great majority of battalion members who did continue with their shooting in the months after Jozefow? Why did the most ordinary of the ordinary men of Battalion 101, the 80 to 90 percent who continued to shoot Jews when they could have chosen not to, behave as they did? In his final chapter, Browning considers a variety of explanations, ranging from theories of obedience, to the persuasiveness of anti-Semitic propaganda, to the pressure to conform.

Of all the explanations summoned by Browning, that of the late Italian novelist Primo Levi—a survivor of Auschwitz—is by far the most astute. Yet Browning somewhat skews Levi's idea of a "gray zone" of ambiguity encompassing both criminals and victims in regimes of terror. Browning says that Levi "dared to suggest that this zone encompassed perpetrators as well." That is technically true, but Levi's whole emphasis in his essay, "The Gray Zone," was on the *distinction* between the Jews and their killers.

In that essay Levi recalls how, in July 1944, 400 Jews from Corfu refused without exception to serve in the Auschwitz *Sonderkommando*, "and were immediately gassed to death." By contrast, the alleged state of compulsion invoked after the war by Nazis brought to trial, Levi writes,

> could have been resolved (actually often was resolved) by some maneuver, some slowdown in career, moderate punishment, or, in the worst of cases, the objector's transfer to the front.

Although Browning is hardly one of those inclined to spray forgiveness indiscriminately in every direction but the Jewish one, the lessons that Levi drew from the Holocaust nevertheless fit Browning's own evidence better than Browning's conclusions do.

Finally, in Browning's view, the compliance of the great majority of Battalion 101 with instructions to murder can best be explained by the urge to conform, which set "the norms of the battalion" in opposition to "the demands of the conscience." Yet as he is unable to produce convincing evidence that conscience was at work in the dissenters, how can we believe it put up much of a struggle in the conformists? Perhaps, as Saul Bellow's protagonist argues in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, "Banality is the adopted disguise of a very powerful will to abolish conscience." Since the Nazi regime had done precisely that, the absence

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of conscience in individual policemen of the regime was indeed "ordinary." That such ordinariness can be terrible is not a modern discovery.

3.

BROWNING's book is very much a product of what in Holocaust studies might be called the school of Hilberg. This is not only because Raul Hilberg (to whom *Ordinary Men* is dedicated) was, in 1982, the first person to call attention to the central role of the reserve police in the Final Solution, but because Browning's book, like Hilberg's massive *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961), is based almost entirely on German archival sources and is not about the Jews—who are entirely silent in this account, which includes no testimony from survivors—but about their destroyers, upon whom it wholly relies for its picture of Jozefow and other abattoirs in Poland.

Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* was justly recognized on its appearance as the definitive history of the process and the machinery of Nazi destruction. It was the first study based upon the entire unindexed collection of Nuremberg documents. Its incisive analysis embraced, in addition to those who killed their victims "personally" (like the *Einsatzgruppen* and the reserve police), the huge network of desk-killers in the German administrative bureaucracy. And not the least of the book's virtues was that Hilberg wrote of the most appalling events in a detached and understated, even ironic, style.

But not everybody was satisfied. The destruction process was presented by Hilberg from the point of view (in the technical sense) of the destroyers, not the victims. The victims, moreover, were described as having "plunged themselves physically and psychologically into catastrophe." Perhaps the harshest of Hilberg's critics was Lucy Dawidowicz, who accused the eminent political scientist of "profound ignorance of Jewish history."

Now Hilberg has brought out a collection of discrete, self-contained essays, *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders*.[3] Much of the first third of the book amplifies (and may depend upon one's awareness of) the pervasive lesson elaborated in his seminal study of 1961: that, although decentralized, the Nazi campaign against the Jews was a vast interlocking organism involving the ministerial bureaucracy, the armed forces, industry, and the Nazi party, and embracing every component of German life, every stratum of society. Some of the representative chapters tell how old bureaucrats, new bureaucrats, physicians, and lawyers were absorbed into this organism.

Both the amount and the nature of the attention given to the Jewish victims in the book's second section may serve to blunt some of the criticism of Hilberg's past views on this subject. His treatment of Jewish leaders, for example, is now measured and relatively sympathetic and "understanding," closer to that of Isaiah Trunk than to the denunciations of Hannah Arendt. Thus, in a chapter entitled "The Unadjusted," Hilberg notes that Jews often had to pass up opportunities to escape because of their responsibility to family members who would be left behind. On the other hand, the "old" Hilberg is still present in certain criticisms of the Jewish Councils in the ghettos of Eastern Europe, or in such observations as this: "The rhythm of compliant behavior, practiced over the centuries, was not about to break at the sight of a ditch."

Hilberg says that the chapters of his book are "modules" that may be read "in any number and any order." That is to say, the book is a small encyclopedia of the Holocaust, but with its departments of knowledge unorganized either by the anti-philosophical principle of the alphabet or by a dominant idea or closely-knit argument. Readers will find in Hilberg a reliable and shrewd guide to the main topics of Holocaust research, and one still capable of the cold contempt for the killers and their protectors that has always characterized his work. But his book does not offer a comprehensive, unified interpretation; for that one would do better to turn back to Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*, either in its original version or the 1985 revision; to the Israeli scholar Leni Yahil's magisterial and meticulously integrated *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945*[4]; or to Lucy Dawidowicz's own *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945* (1975, second edition 1985).

4.

IN READING Hilberg's new book, we get a sense, once again, of the Holocaust as historical actuality, moral quagmire, theological stumbling block. But for a sense of the Holocaust as the seething cauldron of unedifying controversy it has now become, we must turn back to Lucy Dawidowicz. The majority of the essays in *What Is the Use of Jewish History?* deal with the Holocaust, and their titles alone often indicate their embattled nature: "Lies About the Holocaust," "The True History of Babi Yar," "History as Ideology" (originally "Perversions of the Holocaust"), "Indicting American Jews."

More than any other professional historian in America, Lucy Dawidowicz was willing, in her work, to dirty her hands in combat with the vast underworld of charlatans who now hold forth on the subject of the Holocaust: the outright deniers and their influential friends; the "functionalist"

[3] The subtitle is "The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945." Aaron Asher/HarperCollins, 340 pp., $25.00.

[4] Oxford University Press (1990), translated from the Hebrew by Ina Friedman and Haya Galai.

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explainers-away of Nazi intentions; the Germanophiles; the relativists; the universalizers; the "appropriators" who cannot permit the Jews to monopolize all that beautiful suffering for themselves; and the legions of Israel-haters who see the Holocaust as what Hitler called Zionism itself—a way to "slyly dupe the dumb *goyim*."

Scholars generally prefer to deal with controversies that involve the fruitful if often noisy conflict of half-truths. Lucy Dawidowicz set herself the more onerous, Sisyphean labor of rolling back the onslaught of malicious calumny. She did this partly out of a sense of obligation to her profession, whose derelictions of responsibility she documented in *The Holocaust and the Historians* (1981). There she pointed out that the first "revisionist" work on World War II had been written by the reputable English historian A.J.P. Taylor, whose argument—that Hitler had not planned a general war at all—"soon became the banner under which a swarm of Nazi apologists, cranks, and anti-Semites rallied."

Her fellow historians, by averting their eyes and noses from the fever swamps of neo-Nazism or the cesspools of left-wing opinion journalism, may have thought they could escape the defilement. But they were wrong. In 1980, the *American Historical Review*, the journal of the American Historical Association, published a respectful review of a book inspired by Holocaust "revisionism"; and the Organization of American Historians, after selling its membership list to the *Journal of Historical Review*, the publication of the American Holocaust deniers, was at a loss to understand what it had done wrong. Still later, Lucy Dawidowicz found the foul unwholesomeness seeping into books published by university presses.[5]

Lucy Dawidowicz liked to quote Cicero's laws for historians: "The first . . . is that he shall never dare utter an untruth. The second is that he suppress nothing that is true." But finally it was something more than her loyalty to the historian's ideal that moved her to smite hard and throw back the liars. It was, rather, her sense of obligation to the murdered Jews of Europe—the very personal lesson she had learned from the Holocaust. Once, when she and I were discussing these matters, she opined that nobody could write genuine Jewish history without *ahavat yisrael*, love of the Jewish people, and promised to send me a copy of her lecture on this subject. Illness prevented her doing so, but the lecture is now the title essay of *What Is the Use of Jewish History?* Its central message is this:

> Some people think that the professional historian's personal commitments—to his people, his country, his religion, his language—undermine his professional objectivity. Not so. Not so, as long as historians respect the integrity of their sources and adhere strictly to the principles of sound scholarship.

These monitory words still serve as a guide to learning the very particular *and* the very universal lessons the Holocaust never ceases to teach us.

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[5] Hilberg too has entered into combat with the deniers by serving as a prosecution expert at the trials in Canada of Ernst Zundel, a publisher and Hitler idolator. Still, one wonders if revisionist distortion might even have found its way into a tiny corner of his new book. He calls Hitler "the supreme architect of the Jewish catastrophe," but says that "he appears to have vetoed the killing of a thousand Jews on a transport . . . from Berlin to Riga on November 30, 1941." His source for this is none other than David Irving, the notorious Hitler apologist. But Lucy Dawidowicz, in 1981, demonstrated beyond any possibility of contradiction that one had only to examine all four lines of the telephone message from which Irving "interpreted" just two to recognize that it had nothing to do with Hitler trying to stop a transport.

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The Euromess

Angelo M. Codevilla

JUST a year ago, as representatives of the twelve governments making up the European Community (EC) met in the Dutch city of Maastricht to sign the latest in a series of pan-European agreements, polite opinion was unanimous that a united Europe would challenge the United States economically, that it would take charge of reordering the formerly Communist world, and that its "advanced" approach to economic, social, and environmental matters had a lot to teach us. Indeed, polite opinion strongly backed the prospective Clinton administration's desire to imitate Europe's approach to industrial policy, medical and child care, and much more. Today, however, it is evident that Europe will not unite according to the vision of the Maastricht treaty, that its economic policies are a drag on us, that Western Europe is being contaminated by the Communist compost pile, and that its approach to socioeconomic matters has mostly cautionary tales to tell. In 1992 Eurotopia was supposed to emerge. Instead, 1992 became the year of the Euromess.

The Danish people's narrow rejection of the Maastricht treaty; the French people's equally narrow acceptance; Britain's, Italy's, Portugal's, and Spain's abandonment of attempts to maintain the value of their currencies against the Deutschmark; anti-foreigner riots as well as various Eurosummits rife with talk of "saving Europe"—all these are only symptoms. The Euromess itself consists of nothing less than the bankruptcy of the postwar political order. Within each European country people are searching for ways of saying "no" to politicians of all parties, whom they perceive as really belonging to a single party, that of the ruling bureaucracy—a bureaucracy that takes about half a worker's income and no longer seems able to justify doing it.

Contrary to a common perception, the explanation for the opposition to the Maastricht treaty is not nationalism. Rather, it is that people who are growing surlier about national governments which they can control only theoretically are understandably wary of approving a level of government which they cannot control at all.

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I

THE modern European state is so familiar to us that we rarely realize how historically anomalous it is. Yet the high level of taxation in today's Europe—a bit over 50 percent in Scandinavia, a bit less on the continent—is comparable only to what the most rapacious empires of antiquity exacted from slaves. Among all the governments of human history, only the recently deceased Communist regimes have exceeded the modern European states in taking over the family's responsibilities for raising the young and caring for the old, in assuming society's role as arbiter of taste and religion's role as arbiter of truth. But of course the Communists ruled by force. What is remarkable about the highly intrusive regimes of Western Europe is less that they suffer disaffection than that they survive without resorting to physical repression.

This is all the more remarkable given that the bedrock of European civilization is inhospitable to governmental regimentation of ordinary life. Western civilization is built on the distinction—going back to Aristotle and then Augustine—between families and civil society on the one hand and the political realm on the other. On this basis there grew during the Middle Ages a set of restraints on the power of the king to demand one's property, one's military service, entry into one's home, etc. Moreover, no king would have dreamed of setting standards for exercising a profession, let alone for raising children. Sovereignty belonged to God alone.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, however, the theorists of sovereignty, Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, made into a principle the growing preference of noblemen for subjection to a king as the only way to put an end to continued feudal and religious war. But while Europeans first agreed to sacrifice ancient freedoms primarily to secure internal peace, the state's claim to sovereignty quickly shifted to the necessities of international war.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the 19th-century European state was built from the ground up for war. It was in order to administer conscription that Napoleon and then the rest of Europe numbered houses. He first and then others also established schools of engineering and

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mines and fostered certain industries for the same reasons that they adopted national anthems and that, later, they required universal education: to prepare citizens morally, intellectually, and materially to fight for the state. Welsh and Scots; Savoyards and Bretons and Provençals; Lombards and Tuscans; Swabians and Saxons and Bavarians were homogenized into Britishers, French, Italians, and Germans, each worshiping a collective national identity. The essence of 19th-century European politics was that deep divisions between monarchists and republicans, clericals and laicists, liberals and socialists, were all overcome by common nationalistic passions.

Yet just as all this began for the sake of war, so it all came to an end as a result of war. The very senselessness of World War I—the mutual slaughter of peoples who differed from one another much less than they thought—dealt a grievous blow to nationalism, and World War II further weakened its legitimacy. Today, it is almost impossible to imagine the frame of mind of the millions who not so long ago were cheerfully ready to die for the state.

II

BUT the discrediting of nationalism did not also delegitimize the state, since an alternative justification for the state's power had been gaining currency even before World War I: the state, as the agent of modern science, would ensure material progress, while state schools would spread expertise, culture, and morality.

The origins of this view were threefold: utopian socialism, with its dream of establishing happiness through governmental schemes; the Hegelian tradition of public administration, whose intellectual apex was the sociologist Max Weber, and which saw impartial bureaucrats as the embodiment of Reason itself; and the Christian rejection of the 18th-century liberal notion that individuals should be left to themselves to sink or swim. Hence, by the end of the 19th century, a curious coalition of socialists, right-wing Bismarckians, and clericalists was already converging on the idea of what came to be called the welfare state.

The unprecedented domestic regimentation that accompanied World War I also taught the disastrous lesson that government rationalization of the economy could boost production dramatically. Walter Rathenau's trebling of German war production, more than anything in Keynesian or Marxist texts, became the practical inspiration for collectivist economics later variously labeled fascist, Communist, or social-democratic. The result was that, while fratricidal war was discrediting the state as a vehicle for glory, a growing fascination with socioeconomic engineering was providing the state with a warrant for expanding its powers farther than even the most rabid nationalist would have dreamed. Just when people became less and less willing to give their lives for the state, they became more and more willing to give it more and more power *over* those very same lives.

By now, however, this alternative justification for state power has, like nationalism before it, just about run its course. For if nationalism turned out to mean senseless slaughter, the welfare state turned out to mean economic stagnation, social corruption, and above all bureaucracy.

The story of Europe's economic performance over the past generation is essentially that as soon as the goose began to lay golden eggs, the state smothered her. In the 1950's governments took about 25 percent of Europeans' incomes through various kinds of taxes. This was already close to twice the level of taxation in the interwar years, and some three times the pre-World War I level. But few noticed, because postwar rebuilding was roughly doubling standards of living.

By the early 1990's, everyone noticed, since growth in personal income had virtually stopped, while the growth of the public sector and of its "bite"—by now roughly 50 percent of gross domestic product (GDP)—continued apace. Every European was familiar with the ratcheting mechanism: one more budget crisis and another austerity package of increased charges for state services once touted as "free," plus tax increases. Government was reducing hope to a counterintuitive proposition: the less you get to keep, the better off you will be.

Today, high taxes are only a part of Europe's economic troubles. Starting and running a business involves more red tape and officious officials than most Americans can imagine. "Social" laws that make it difficult to shed employees also make businesses think twice before hiring them. Generous unemployment benefits reduce the pressure to take available jobs. Substantial percentages of the workforce are employed in inefficient nationalized industries, from railroads to coal mining to broadcasting, as well as in subsidized private industries, from agriculture to computers to aircraft.

The bottom line is that a mid-level bureaucrat in Europe now takes home the equivalent of $30,000 per year. But given that prices in Europe are almost twice as high as in the U.S., this average European's lot is not too far above the official U.S. poverty line. A two-earner professional couple in Copenhagen or Milan can afford to own a modest apartment or a car, but not both. Understandably, then, Europeans no longer regard the state as a creator of wealth.

SO, TOO, with major social problems, which until recently Europeans turned to the state to solve. The first and still the biggest European uplift project—Italy's 40-year attempt to bring its southern regions up to socioeconomic parity with the north—has corrupted

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both recipients and donors, and is now fueling a serious movement in the north to secede from the south. Then there is Germany's attempt to uplift the former Soviet zone of occupation by artificially raising wages and unemployment and other social benefits to West German levels while forestalling the collapse of East German companies. Whether these methods, comparable to methadone maintenance for heroin addicts, will ever wean the East Germans from socialist habits, they surely are increasing the weight of government in the West. Worse, many of the very white inhabitants of this area (like their counterparts in smaller pockets of dependency elsewhere in Europe) have taken on some of the characteristics that we tend to associate with America's black underclass.

It is not surprising that Germans, accustomed to lining up for state privileges, should strike out against those they perceive as alien competitors for the largest handouts they have ever seen (especially since the German asylum law, written for another time, invites foreigners to line up). Nor is it surprising that they should do so under the most offensive intellectual justification in their tradition, Nazism. But note that these Germans are physically and morally indistinguishable from the British hooligans or the French or Belgians who live in their countries' expanding welfare culture. There is no danger that any EC country will march off under Nazi banners. They are not going to follow any banner at all for any purpose whatsoever. The danger (as in America) is that the crime, the vandalism, and the very dispiriting presence of the modern welfare underclass will slowly destroy the quality of life in European cities.

The immigration of millions of people from the third world adds to this process. These immigrants, mainly from North Africa, do not come to Europe to become Belgians or Italians. Nor are European societies in the least capable of or (with the partial exception of France) interested in assimilating them. Europe's planned, bureaucratized, welfarized economies already have trouble generating enough jobs for the (decreasing) number of young people that they produce.

But giving the new immigrants a chance at economic integration would be child's play in comparison with the problem of cultural integration. Most of the new immigrants are and intend to remain Muslims, and Europe's contemporary secular culture, which is even losing its own young people, hardly seems a good long-term bet against Islam (especially the brand of it that has less to do with the Qu'ran than with hatred of Western civilization).

Europe spends a lot on culture. On a per-capita basis France's Ministry of Culture spends 50 times what the U.S. pays for the National Endowment for the Arts. But Europe's cultural establishment, like our own, devotes its energies to fighting everything that once made European civilization attractive to ordinary people, including immigrants. In sum, Europe is neither shutting out immigration nor turning it into a good thing for the long run. The fact that mainstream parties have left to extremists the formulation of a response to third-world immigration is another sign of the bankruptcy of Europe's establishment.

Europeans are also being invaded by refugees fleeing murder and despair in the formerly Communist world. These people could be assimilated. But again, European governments can bring themselves neither to welcome them with open arms (as the U.S. enriched itself by welcoming Cuban refugees), nor to slam the door in their faces, nor to do what is necessary to alleviate the conditions in the East that are driving them West. The EC governments have refused to let East Europeans sell what they can in the West, and they have shied away from protecting the Croats, Bosnians, and Albanians from the ethnic-cleansing policies of the Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic. So, by default, Western Europe is importing desperation.

ON TOP of all this, the European state has lost its former reputation for administrative efficiency. The non-poor increasingly avoid national health-care systems, while the poor and lower middle classes are stuck with worsening service and ever higher charges. European parents, who once considered state schools to be the very standard of high culture, now notice that their children are learning less than they themselves were taught, and that they are bringing home the opposites of culture and morality. Pension systems vary, but everywhere the impression has spread that tomorrow's retirees will receive only so much as tomorrow's workers may be willing to give them. More importantly, today's retirees are receiving less than they thought they would, and fear further austerity.

Europeans have also lost their old faith in the state's impartiality. While it had never crossed the minds of Italians that government might be impartial, many other Europeans seem to have been genuinely shocked in recent years at revelations that officials high and low were dispensing preferential treatment in connection with jobs, contracts, credit—in other words, that bureaucrats have friends and that the state is not a family but a giant patronage machine.

The harsh truth is that impartiality was possible in grandfather's time because the tasks of government were smaller and better defined, whereas spending half a nation's income—whether it is done by socialists or by conservatives—involves making the fortunes of some at the expense of others. That is why Europeans do not believe they can throw the rascals out without putting in a set who are just as bad.

This represents a radical change from the days when each of the parties stood for, and was known to stand for, a particular vision of the good life.

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Thus, for example, in the early postwar period, the German Socialist leader Kurt Schumacher was not exaggerating when he accused his Christian-Democratic rival Konrad Adenauer of fostering a society characterized by capitalism and religion; nor did Adenauer exaggerate when he painted his opponents on the Left as wishing to substitute the state for the family. In France and Italy, there were straightforward battles between, on the one side, Communist leaders who took their inspiration (as well as their vacations, medical care, and money) from Moscow, and, on the other side, parties officially backed by the Catholic Church, with the Socialists trying to straddle the divide.

Yet by the late 1960's, at least where domestic policy was concerned, only the rhetoric of these old struggles remained. For as Europe's Christian Democrats learned that the bigger the government one administered, the more patronage available for one's friends, they began to compete with the Socialists and the Social Democrats in promising, taxing, and spending. European politics today is dispiritingly value-free.

IN CONTRAST to domestic affairs, real differences did persist in European politics until only yesterday over policy toward the Communist world. Indeed, from the late 1970's until the fall of the Berlin Wall, these differences even widened, as many in the European Left seemed bent on returning to the openly pro-Soviet, anti-American attitudes of the late 1940's. (The West German Social Democrats even negotiated a turgid communiqué with the East German Communists to the effect that they had more in common with each other than with the rotten American warmongers and their local running dogs.)

Hence during the 1980's, elections were dominated more often than not by the question: do you want to stand with the Americans or do you want to accommodate the Soviets? Standing with the Americans helped not only the conservative parties—German and Italian Christian Democrats, British Tories, and French Gaullists—but also Italian, French, and Spanish Socialists. Being soft on Communism penalized British Labor and German Social Democrats. But that is all gone.

Gone with it is the last vestige of the European state's original basis for legitimacy—war-making. Much as Europeans detested war, a substantial percentage of them supported the Atlantic alliance that was keeping the Communist monster at bay. Polls throughout the cold war showed consistently that the bulk of voters, even for leftist parties, opposed unilateral disarmament and wanted American troops to stay in Europe. Today the polls show that while the proportion of Europeans who want American armies on their continent has actually risen, so (except in France) has the proportion of those willing to make radical cuts in their own armed forces. What this means is that Europeans no longer look to their own governments to protect them. And the reason is that these governments are run by a generation of leaders who do not inspire trust.

The elder statesman, France's François Mitterrand, represents a party that has been receiving only about one-fifth of the popular vote. Germany's Helmut Kohl bet everything on trying to introduce capitalism in the East through socialist methods, and has nothing to offer but more taxes as far as the eye can see. Britain's Prime Minister, John Major, is a colorless man who drifts with the wind. In Italy, where there is no real distinction between government and opposition, the entire political class is widely regarded as a bunch of thieves.

Contemporary Europeans are not revolutionaries. They express their disaffection with the state in protest votes for regional and local parties as well as in referenda. But mostly they are turning their backs on government. One gets the impression that few if any Europeans would put themselves in harm's way to stop extremist mobs from rushing parliament buildings, and that perhaps even news of a foreign invasion would not prevent anyone from sitting down to dinner.

In short, European welfare states are as weak as they are big.

III

THE movement for European unity that began in the 1920's with the writings of Jean Monnet was supposed to be something of a cure for a political culture mortally wounded by World War I. Monnet's immediate aim in proposing functional economic integration was to restore some of the interdependence and human contact that had existed prior to the Great War. But since passportless travel and easy trade had not prevented that war, they could not ensure future peace. That is why Monnet hoped that in the long run a new, vital European identity would transcend the now-discredited nationalisms. In Monnet's view, it was economic technocracy that would serve primarily to foster the growth of pan-European sentiment.

Monnet's plans did not get serious attention until after World War II had discredited nationalism even further. Yet the statesmen who championed Monnet's approach—Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi, and Charles de Gaulle—did not wait for a common market to tackle the task of uniting Europe psychologically. The culmination of their work was the de Gaulle-Adenauer treaty of 1963, celebrated by a solemn Mass over Charlemagne's tomb, which American observers ridiculed as the old men's wedding. Nevertheless, Franco-German concord has been the primary blessing of European life since World War II.

In 1992 the outlines of a pan-European consensus remain as clear and firm as they were 40 years ago: never again a war among us; free move-

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ment of people and goods; stand together to safeguard and promote our common civilization. The EC has enjoyed broad support because of the misconception that it has been working on the basis of this consensus. But now the Maastricht treaty has for the first time brought home to the average European the fact that the EC is on a path very different from that of Adenauer and de Gaulle.

The old men's approach amounted, on the one hand, to the dropping of barriers to common economic and social life, and, on the other hand, to greater coordination of government policy. Instituting a common market was to be easy: simply drop trade restrictions and free enterprise would do the rest. The governments were also freely to adopt increasingly similar policies in order to pursue similar objectives, and technocratic arrangements were to support this growing agreement.

But even before Adenauer and de Gaulle left office a generation ago, the pan-European movement began diverging from this set of prescriptions. The EC's ancestor, the Coal and Steel Community (1952), brought together the thoroughly cartelized German coal and French iron industries under the auspices of an international High Authority—in other words, a super-cartel. It resulted in more people and goods crossing borders, but it was not free trade. The Common Market's Common Agricultural Policy of 1962, which set a common (high) tariff on agricultural products in order to ensure uneconomically high incomes for French, German, and Italian farmers at the expense of all European consumers, was the very denial of the free market. All this was intended to be temporary, transitional. Instead it provided both the financing and the model for the EC.

Thus the EC's approach to economic integration is the very opposite of the free market. In any given sector (agriculture, cars, computers, condoms), the EC Commission begins with an external tariff. Then it sits the leading producers in each of the member countries down with labor and government regulators from those countries, and works out standards for production, prices, and trade. These are implicit market-sharing arrangements. Big businesses love the EC Commission because it virtually assures that they will stay alive. The lucky ones can be picked as champions to be built up by subsidies, and then to go out and conquer global markets. (In fact, however, the major recipients of government aid—computers and aircraft—are losing money.)

EC regulations have been justly ridiculed for banning all but six kinds of apples from commerce and for setting the length of Eurocondoms at precisely 15.2 cm., while at the same time failing to touch the monopolies owned by the member states, from tobacco to telecommunications. But the EC has been unjustly credited with breaking down borders. To be sure, truck traffic now flows from the Baltic to the Mediterranean without stopping at borders. But that is because the product and its destination were regulated beforehand.

Obviously the regulators are aiming at an enterprise other than mere European integration. That enterprise is the corporate nanny-state. It is no coincidence that as socialism has acquired a bad name in national governments, it has found a home in the EC Commission under the stewardship of Jacques Delors, an unreconstructed French socialist out of the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration.*

But the most important effect of the EC's single-market regulations has been to diminish the public's fervor for European unity. For years now, national bureaucrats have answered the public's inquiries about new regulations by explaining that it was something required by the EC. That meant the matter was out of the government's hands, out of the citizen's hands: it might as well have come down from heaven, and objecting to it was not only futile but something akin to disturbing the peace of Europe. Indeed, the EC has become the perfect source for intrusive, picayune socialist legislation that national parliaments would be loath to pass for fear of public retribution.

IV

THE Maastricht treaty was supposed to carry the current approach to its logical conclusion. The heart of the treaty is a set of procedures for adopting a common currency and a common independent central bank on the model of Germany's Bundesbank. Never mind that Germany itself did not meet the inflation and deficit criteria for admission to the club; only two out of twelve signatories did. More important, divergence in actual economic policies had already undermined the thirteen-year-old system of exchange-value coordination.

Quite simply, in 1991 the German government did not ask permission from other EC governments (and disregarded the advice of its own central bank) when it traded real Deutschmarks for worthless East German marks, undertook to subsidize the East, and decided to pay for it all by borrowing rather than taxing. This drove German interest rates up to 10 percent, forced other EC governments to follow, and placed the EC's more vulnerable currencies (British and Italian) in a squeeze between low growth and high interest rates. The result was that in September 1992, Britain and Italy (and then Spain and Portugal in November) had to devalue their currencies after paying billions of dollars to fight speculators in futile attempts to maintain the integrity of the system.

The lesson was lost on nobody that everyone would have been better off if Europe's leaders had made more competent economic policy de-

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cisions, and coordinated actual policy better, rather than working on abstract plans for a new currency. The turmoil also raised the question: do we want to put the economic future of the whole continent into the hands of these people?

The treaty's second most important feature is the social chapter. This consists of a lengthy list of subjects, like worker safety, rules for hiring and firing, medical care for women, sexual discrimination, the rights of labor unions, and practically everything else that might come to the mind of a social engineer. The treaty empowers the Commission to issue directives on these subjects which every government in the Community would be obliged to adopt. The British government, recently having won major battles against labor-union power and not wanting to refight them with its opponents backed by Europe, opted out of the social chapter. In so doing it raised for all Europeans another question: do we really want to give the Eurocrats a blank check over the most intimate details of our lives?

With regard to foreign policy, the Maastricht procedures for arriving at decisions are complex—obviously the fruit of long, hard bargaining. But there is scarcely a word about objectives and none at all about the problems of the day: what to do about war in the former Yugoslavia; how to avoid a war in the former USSR, and how to respond if one breaks out; whether or not to build all-European forces for expeditions off the continent; what sort of relations to have with NATO; etc., etc.

Still, if the EC is so unsatisfying, why are governments lining up all the way to Kiev to get in? Because the EC offers a tempting bargain, the very bargain that led to the accession of Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. The poor country coming in gets a lot of money up front. Ireland, for example, gets over $1,400 for every man, woman, and child. The money pays compensation for damages suffered through competition, and to support the welfare state. The country's big businesses get to sell to the big EC market, and at prices higher than those they had at home. They also get protection from Japanese and American imports.

In exchange, the new member gradually accepts all the EC's regulations. This tends to raise labor costs and to drive out of business and into government dependency those firms that are too small or not well enough connected to play by the new rules. In the long run this is a bad bargain for the recipients, who are deprived of the opportunity to undercut the continent's high-cost countries, as well as for countries like France and Germany, who pay the bill. But in the short run it looks good to the outs.

As for the ins, the reaction to the Maastricht treaty has been a crescendo of disapproval. The more people from Denmark to Crete have learned about Maastricht, the less they have liked it. So it is a safe bet that the treaty has already been overtaken by events.

V

NEVERTHELESS, the Euromess remains. To get some perspective on it, imagine how different Europe would be if Konrad Adenauer were alive today and chairman of the EC Commission. Anyone proposing that the Commission issue fine-print Euroregulations would have received an Adenauer lecture on how inspiration builds allegiance while meddling in details destroys it. And just imagine what that austere old Rhinelander would have said to the Eurocrat who placed on his desk a proposed standardization of Eurocondoms. *What? Is this what 3,000 years of civilization have led to? Don't you have anything better to do with your life?*

Imagine, too, how different German unification would have been if it had been run by Adenauer. Drawing on his miracle of 1948, he would have allowed the rotten system in the East to disintegrate, permitting Westerners to make real investments at bargain prices. Instead of raising taxes to pay for welfare, he would have cut both taxes and regulations to smooth the way for Easterners into the economy.

And imagine, finally, his response if an aide had pointed out to him that support for military action to stop the war in Bosnia was shaky. Adenauer would probably have answered as he did in 1954, when he confronted opposition to the establishment of the West German army: *Let's set to work and build up that support.*

The worst news about the Euromess is that politicians who have grown up as amoral brokers of favor are not about to become Adenauers. True, these Europoliticians have begun to perceive that promising, taxing, and spending more will not make them more secure in their jobs. Hence there is now a lot of talk about privatization, decentralization, or, in Eurospeak, subsidiarity. Even socialists are campaigning on the need to lower taxes, and Sweden itself is in the third year of a much ballyhooed process of backing away from statism. Even so, no one has begun to wean the vast patronage networks—rich companies, middle-class intellectuals, or poor welfare recipients—off the state.

New politicians are thus needed, but as in the formerly Communist countries, they will arise only to the extent that the old ones default. Two phenomena already mentioned bear watching: the growing use of referenda, and the growing importance of local and regional government. Both enable new politicians to build direct relationships with the electorate and to strike a decent balance between their usefulness to society and their cost. But in Western Europe, the decay and the default are slow and statism is not yet completely discredited. That is why the Euromess will get worse before it gets better.

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Rabbi Nahman and the Effendi

A Story

Yehoshua Bar-Yosef

WINTER in the year 1799 stormed the handful of houses perched on Mount Safed, attacking with awesome might. For four days and nights the hills were shrouded in a mass of clouds that concealed even a glimpse of blue. It seemed that sky and sun, moon and stars, had fled the cosmos. Damp winds cold as ice assailed the mountain, striking ceaseless harsh blows at everything in their path. People setting foot outside were forced to cling to the walls. Torrents of rain delivered powerful slanting blows. Earthen roofs crumbled, thick stone walls became saturated with water. Stone arches tottered. Frailer homes collapsed. The freezing moisture penetrated everything, even bed linen, blankets, woolen garments.

Safed was cut off completely. None of the Arab fellahin brought the fruit of his fields. Charcoal sellers did not come with coal for stoves or warming pans. The townspeople had to make do with the contents of their larders—wheat, beans, oil, olives. And since poverty had kept most larders bare, people went about starved from cold and hunger alike. In most houses there was no way to boil water. People clothed themselves with whatever came to hand, and still their teeth chattered. Dozens gave up the ghost, and members of the burial society endangered their own lives to ensure a decent interment.

It was as if the days of the Flood had returned, or the primeval chaos before Creation. At any rate, so people believed. They were afraid to leave their homes even to attend a prayer service. The study houses, usually full of worshipers and students, were deserted. If a man could not enlist a *minyan* among his nearest neighbors, he prayed by himself, mumbling through a throat swollen by winter's ravages.

No one thought to connect the Angel of Winter's fury with the arrival of a stranger, a lean young man of twenty-eight: Nahman, son of the granddaughter of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism. The locals were accustomed to visitors who would come for a few days or weeks to prostrate themselves at the two-centuries-old grave of the great kabbalist, Rabbi Isaac Luria—known as the Ari, or Lion of God—and at the tombs of rabbinic sages in the vicinity. Such guests would put up at Zindel's inn or at a relative's, and some gave generous donations to the synagogues for the honor of being called up to the Torah. But this strange young man had apparently neither family in town nor money for the inn; with his beggar's knapsack he went straight to the Upper Synagogue of the Ari, and settled in.

The locals either had not heard of him or deliberately ignored him—and they certainly did not identify this young pauper with the pedigreed scholar whom the Hasidim of Tiberias had already received with great honor. Nor did the young scholar announce himself, or talk to anyone; he was withdrawn, self-absorbed. The *shamash*, in his capacity as custodian of the synagogue, might have told them that the scholar had asked permission to sleep on the bench and had given him a few coins to buy bread, olives, and oil. The *shamash*, who soon realized that the young scholar was pious and learned in prayer and Zohar, brought him three woolen blankets and from time to time also a hot drink to refresh his spirits. But the young scholar did not waste words with the *shamash*, either. At most he answered him "yes" or "no."

It was on the scholar's first night in the synagogue that the storm burst out, but the townspeople were too busy protecting themselves from the depredations of the weather to pay attention. But although *they* did not bother, or were not astute enough, the scholar knew with absolute certainty that the Evil One himself was overturning the world to prevent his meeting with the Ari

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YEHOSHUA BAR-YOSEF, who died as this story was being prepared for publication, won the Bialik Prize, Israel's highest award for literary achievement, in 1984. Born into a well-known hasidic family in Safed in 1912, Mr. Bar-Yosef grew up in Hungary, where he attended the Satmar Yeshiva. He returned to Jerusalem while still a teenager to complete his studies and became a full-time writer in 1935. Among his Hebrew works, which include an autobiography, several novels, and dozens of short stories, are *The Enchanted City*, *Succah of Peace*, *The People of Beit Rimon*, *On the Way to the Red Rock*, and *Tales of Safed and Jerusalem*. His story, "The Stranger," was published in COMMENTARY in November 1984. The present story was translated from the Hebrew by S. Shabetai.

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and with the ancient sage, Shimon bar Yohai, at their graves. Aware that this meeting would bring an end to his rule over the world, Satan was fighting desperately for survival.

THE battle had begun back in Midbidovka, the little town in the distant Ukraine where the scholar had settled with his wife and three daughters after his father-in-law had departed this life. From his twelfth year, when he had stood under the wedding canopy with his spouse (his junior by one year), until his twenty-fourth, he had been supported by his father-in-law, a tenant in the village of Hostin. There his three daughters were born, and there he was free to immerse himself in Jewish mysticism. When the need to support his family forced him to move to Midbidovka, a small group of Hasidim gathered around him, supplying him with a meager living and absorbing an abundance of his Divine inspiration.

For a period of four years he pondered the great secret that would eventually lead to redemption and the mending of the vessels that had been broken at the creation of the world, thus putting an end to Satan's rule. In 1798 he decided to go up to *Eretz Yisrael* to prostrate himself on the grave of his grandfather, Rabbi Nahman of Horodenko, who had been privileged to be buried in holy soil, and to visit the graves of the Ari and Shimon bar Yohai. There he would commune with their spirits and garner the secret of a certain combination of letters forming the Holy Name, which he needed for the immense deed of salvation. He had not revealed his plan even to his followers, in order not to raise their hopes, or to plunge them into frustration if he should fail to achieve it. All he said was that his soul thirsted to see the Holy Land and to visit his grandfather's grave and those of the Ari and the mishnaic sages in the Galilee.

Traditionally it was old men, who had already married off their children and set something aside for old age, who went up to *Eretz Yisrael* to spend their last days in Torah and prayer and to be graced with the privilege of burial in holy soil. Young men could not leave wife and children to the mercies of the street merely because of their longing for the Holy Land. But Nahman did not consider himself tied by worldly obligations. He saw himself neither as a husband in the accepted sense nor even as a father. In his eyes all worldly matters were meaningless trifles, mere vanity. Yes, a Jew was obliged to fulfill the commandment to be fruitful and multiply, to bless the food he put into his mouth, to desist from studying in order to sleep a few hours at night. But all this was only a necessary evil. The principal justification of flesh and blood was to guard the soul, that joyful songbird, so that it could sing its songs of love and adoration to its Creator and Maker.

Accordingly, he told his wife that he wished to sell the house, furniture, and other goods to cover the expenses of his journey. His wife, who knew him well, bowed her head without a word. But she sent their twelve-year-old daughter to appeal to a father's pity. The girl, who was already betrothed, raised her pale, tear-stained face with its frightened blue eyes and quivering mouth. He was moved, taken aback, by the force of the pity that flooded him. But then the thought occurred to him that his own daughter, all unwittingly, was no more than Satan's emissary. And so, when she asked, with heartbreaking naiveté, "Who will look after Mother and the children?," he replied coldly, "You will move into your father-in-law's house; your mother will work as a servant for strangers; and merciful Jews will take pity on your two little sisters."

The cruel answer astonished all who heard it, but his followers took upon themselves the support of his wife and daughters, raising a sum for the expenses of the journey via the cheapest possible route. He would be accompanied by one of his disciples who was more worldly than he, and fluent in Russian.

THE first battle with Satan had been fought—and won. From this moment on, however, Satan did not spare him. The horses pulling the carriage in which he traveled to the port of Odessa were possessed by a spirit of madness. Twice he was thrown, and only a miracle prevented his bones from being crushed.

In a dream one night a horse appeared to him and said: "Conceited fool! What have you to do with the redemption of the world? Because of you, Satan implanted a spirit of madness within me and endangered my miserable soul. Because of you I almost broke my two front legs. Why am I to blame in your quarrel with Satan? If you wish to confront him, go on foot, and don't bring calamity on me!" In the dream he answered: "Dumb beast! Don't you want the broken vessels to be repaired and the Messiah to come?" But the horse replied: "I most certainly do not! What will horses do in the days of the Messiah? Who will need us when braided Sabbath loaves and silk clothes grow on trees? We will be sent back to the forests to live there like wild animals." "And what about the divine spark that is in the soul of every living creature?" "God created me to be a horse, not to mend His broken vessels." "Away with you, Satan! The Evil One speaks from your throat!" The horse burst into a ringing laugh, raised its hooves, and flew away, vanishing into the vasty blue. This was his first conversation with Satan.

But the ache in his bones from the jolting of the carriage was as nothing compared to what awaited him on the ship. In the midst of the bustling preparations he suddenly found himself alone. To the dockers and sailors his ancestry, his learning, his position as a hasidic rabbi, meant nothing; he was a poor scared Jewish scholar who

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had bought passage from Odessa to Constantinople. Had someone told them that this skin-and-bones student was the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, on his way to *Eretz Yisrael* to call forth the Messiah and mend the vessels broken at Creation, they would have thought him mad. Even those eccentrics who went up to the Holy Land to worship at holy places were for the most part stalwart peasants traveling in bands, well supplied with bedding and food, while this wretched Jew was alone and wearing outlandish, skimpy garments, his possessions in one small bundle, scared out of his wits and cowering in a corner, his eyes closed and his lips moving in prayer.

This was before Satan began rocking the ship with giant roaring waves. Then Nahman began to comprehend the real meaning of *nefilat mokhin*, the descent of the spirit. He was as helpless as a leaf in the vicious storm that swooped down to engulf him. Though he donned phylacteries and wrapped himself in his prayer shawl, though his lips shaped the words that came to them automatically, his consciousness seemed to have deserted him. On board the plunging ship he felt cut off from his body as well as from his soul, and he knew clearly that this was the work of Satan.

DISEMBARKING with his traveling companion at Constantinople, he felt his physical senses returning. His eyes began to take in the wonders of the big city, its mosques and palaces, the strange colorful clothes worn by the crowds of passers-by. His ears began to hear the bustle of the street, the songs of the peddlers and the voices of the donkeymen and camel drivers, and his nostrils began to sense the strong odors of perfumes, spices, garbage, the centuries-old smells of an ancient city. His disciple ran about the port, calling out *Shema Yisrael*, "Hear O Israel!," until he found a local Jew who understood a few words of Russian. The man took them to a Jewish inn where there were several Russian Jews on their way home from pilgrimages to *Eretz Yisrael*. Here the two rested from the hardships of the journey and regained their strength.

None of the guests at the inn knew anything about Nahman. Even if they had been told, it would have meant nothing to them. And this surprised and even abashed Nahman. For the first time in his life he was an anonymous Jew among Jews. His fame, his ancestry, were insubstantial. But he also felt freed; a weight seemed to have been lifted from his shoulders. And, strangely, Satan no longer impinged on his consciousness—as if in Satan's eyes, too, he had become anonymous, or no longer a source of danger.

Had not King David, the sweet singer of Israel, changed his tune and dribbled into his beard to deceive Lachish the king of Gath? In *gematria*, Jewish mystical numerology, the Hebrew words for "might of Lachish" equaled "Satan." King David, then, had successfully eluded Satan by pretending to be mad. And so Nahman began to wander around the Constantinople markets singing Psalms and Sabbath songs to himself in a tuneless mumble. To the townspeople he was a strange sight in his hasidic dress, long earlocks, and wispy beard, and his soft humming did nothing to change their view. But for the first time in his life he felt a mighty surge of freedom, an unimagined pleasure of release. Not that he transgressed religious commandments by so much as a hair's-breadth. It was enough for him to *imagine* that he was sticking out his tongue and screwing up his face, to be mad merely in his imagination. This alone made him laugh and be happy as he had never laughed and never been happy in his life.

On returning to the inn he reverted to his normal persona, doffing one disguise and donning another. During those days he tasted paradise in his prayers. He felt that Satan was far away, almost nonexistent. He sensed with almost palpable faith the presence of divine powers. He actually *felt* the Creator listening to his prayers and rejoicing in them, and this sense of the real presence of the Creator, in contrast to Satan's non-presence, filled his soul with heavenly bliss.

In the inn there was a Sephardi emissary from Jerusalem who had been sent to Europe to collect money for the poor of Jerusalem. For the first time in his life Nahman encountered a Jew who could not speak Yiddish and whose Hebrew accent was strange to him, with its unfamiliar vowels and stresses. The Sephardi lingered over his prayers and in reciting them he displayed an awareness of the Ari's teachings by the way he uttered the Name of God. Nahman greatly desired to speak to him, to ask him questions concerning the Name of God according to *gematria*. But he feared to reveal himself: Satan was most likely keeping close watch. Then one day the Sephardi suddenly announced to the other guests what had been revealed to him in a dream: even though he was hale and hearty and not yet forty years of age, he was soon to die, and therefore he was cutting short his journey and returning to Jerusalem.

Nahman was struck with fear. In the presence of a holy Jew like this, Satan's henchmen must be as numerous as bees near a honeypot. And they were playing a clownish game with Nahman, encouraging him to think they had forgotten him so that he would indulge in a madman's labyrinthine logic. In other words, all his ponderings and reflections had led him into a blind alley.

IF NAHMAN needed further proof, he received it on the ship from Constantinople to the Holy Land. No sooner had they reached the open sea than another mighty storm sprang up, in comparison to which that first storm on the Black Sea had been like the gentle rock-

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ing of a cradle. All the travelers, non-Jews too, prayed at the tops of their voices to be saved from drowning. Only Nahman sat in his corner, staring vacantly at the fear-crazed worshipers. If he were to scream and pray like the others, Satan would think he was afraid and would continue his tricks. If, however, he refrained from praying, he might show Satan that he was determined to wage war to the end.

He asked himself: could Satan read his thoughts? In light of the verse, "The Lord knoweth men's thoughts," he concluded that Satan could not, for if he could, the Psalmist would not have attributed such knowledge to the Holy One alone. This, then, must be Satan's weak point: he could not know more than flesh and blood could know. But then how did Satan know why he was going to *Eretz Yisrael*? Well, anybody with a brain in his head could have guessed that a Jew of Nahman's ancestry, especially one who had been immersed for years in the mysteries, would not be making the journey to *Eretz Yisrael* for nothing. So Satan must assuredly be scouting about and guessing as to the reason. Still, guessing was not certainty. If Satan were now watching Nahman with his thousand eyes, better he should see him sitting quietly and unafraid.

At that moment several of those calling on heaven rebuked Nahman for not joining in their prayer. One woman was especially vehement. He said to her quietly: "Cease your ranting and the sea will cease its anger." This unexpected answer shocked them into silence, and then they saw that the storm was dying down. Within a few hours the sea was still.

Nahman was amazed. It was the first miracle he had worked himself. From the day he had achieved the age of reason, he had believed in the miraculous deeds ascribed to the Baal Shem Tov and the other hasidic rabbis. But, as was his way, he had also sought to understand what he believed, and not to rely on blind faith alone. On this occasion he understood thoroughly that the miracle was no more than a coincidence—the sea had been about to calm itself of its own accord.

But was it really as simple as that? Where was Satan in this explanation? He had no answer. From then on, however, the Jewish passengers regarded him with awe. The Sephardi emissary, in his strange Hebrew, asked him confidentially which combination of letters forming the Holy Name he had used in his secret prayer. Nahman pretended he did not understand the question. He still hoped to distract Satan's mind.

Indeed, it did seem that Satan's attention had been withdrawn—at least until the ship docked at Jaffa. Then Satan put it into the Turkish captain's head that Nahman was a French spy, no less. It mattered not that the other Jewish passengers claimed to know the unworldly scholar, or that he spoke not a word of French. The captain stood firm: they could all disembark—except for the French spy. So Nahman stayed on board with his disciple until they reached Haifa.

Satan most assuredly feared Nahman's going up to Jerusalem and praying at the Western Wall. But the fool must have been unaware that Nahman's intention was to reach Safed and the Ari's grave, which were in fact closer to Haifa than to Jaffa. Nahman laughed to himself: I've tricked him again. He thinks he's delayed me—wonder of wonders!

NAHMAN disembarked on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the New Year, and washing away the dirt of the journey, immersed himself in the ritual bath in honor of the holy day. He took part in the service at the local hasidic prayer house. The atmosphere there made him feel at home, and joined to this feeling was the holiness of *Eretz Yisrael.* His exultation knew no bounds. But he was incapable of retaining any mood for more than a day or two. On the second day of the New Year, he suffered a severe attack of melancholy.

On the following day Satan appeared to him in the guise of a young Arab effendi who came to the inn and told the landlord that he wished to speak with his guest. The landlord, who knew the effendi as a member of one of the town's most respected families, quickly acceded, even though he could not for the life of him imagine the reason for this unusual request. He also agreed to serve as the effendi's interpreter. And so the young effendi seated himself on a cushioned chair offered as a mark of respect by the landlord, who crouched on a low stool.

For a long time the effendi did not utter a word, staring at Nahman with glassy eyes and a frozen expression. Then he said to the landlord: "Tell him that he is a handsome man and that he pleases me." The landlord did not know how to translate this strange remark. Nahman asked him: "What did the uncircumcised man say?" The landlord replied: "The Ishmaelites are not uncircumcised. They circumcise themselves without turning back the foreskin. As for what he said, it is something very strange which does not need to be repeated." Nahman insisted: "I wish to know everything." The interpreter told him: "He said that you please him and you are a handsome man." "Strange words, indeed," Nahman responded, and fell silent.

The effendi, too, was silent for a long time, until he turned his thoughts into words: "Tell him that his beard is too thin and that he should grow it as he grows his earlocks." Nahman replied: "Tell him that I have never cut my earlocks or my beard, and that they grow according to the Creator's design." After another prolonged silence, the effendi rejoined: "Tell him that he is not only handsome, he is also clever and wise." This ended the exchange of words at their first meeting.

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At their next two meetings the effendi brought a basket of figs, dates, and pomegranates as a gift for Nahman, but did not open his lips and did not use the interpreter. He sat on the cushioned chair and looked stonefaced at Nahman. On the fourth day he brought two elegant swords sheathed in scabbards inlaid with gold and ivory. He asked the landlord to tell Nahman that he had come to duel with him to the death. Both Nahman and the landlord were thrown into a panic. Nahman said to the landlord: "Tell him I do not fight with swords, and if he wishes to kill me I will not raise a finger to prevent him, for it must be the will of God."

The effendi, amazed at this answer, said that since Nahman of his own free will had placed his life in his hands, he would repay him measure for measure. Let the scholar take one of the swords and cut off his head. Here, his neck was ready. And the effendi laid his head on the table and bared his neck to the sword.

Only after the landlord explained to him over and over again that the scholar did not wish, God forbid, to harm a hair of his head, and that the scholar's heart was full of good will, peace, and friendship, did the effendi raise his head. His face lit up, he opened his arms and embraced the terrified scholar, declaring emotionally: "You are my brother in life and in death, now and forever." He insisted that the scholar ask for whatever he wanted, and he would fulfill his wishes with all his heart. So Nahman asked for two mules and an escort to take him and his disciple to Tiberias, and this was granted.

The journey to Tiberias was accomplished safely. Three armed guards escorted Nahman and his disciple as their master's honored guests. The time spent in Tiberias with hasidic families was a holiday for them, physically and spiritually. From Yom Kippur to Sukkot the local Hasidim carried him on their shoulders, and he almost forgot the reason he had come to *Eretz Yisrael.* He immersed himself in the delights of prayer and study of the Zohar, feeling that he was in an earthly Garden of Eden. Never before had he known such inner happiness. Had he been brought into the world merely for the sake of these few weeks of sacred joy, it would have been enough for him.

But the thought soon gave rise to its opposite—had he really come into the world for this? What of the mending of the vessels? And what of the exiled *Shekhinah,* the divine Godhead? In this serenity there must be no little trickery on the part of Satan, who was coaxing and lulling men into accepting the broken vessels so as not to endanger his rule on earth. And he, Nahman, had let himself be tempted by sacred delights, patting himself on the back while gorging on the rare delicacies of holiness!

The scholar decided to send his faithful disciple to Jerusalem. He would go up to Safed alone and there make every effort to reenter the state of *nefilat mokhin,* the descent of the spirit, that abysmal depression wherein he might achieve the exultant illumination that would lead to the fulfillment of his vision. Thus reasoning, he arrived in Safed, settled on the synagogue bench, and withdrew into his distressing thoughts, his hunger and cold, while the winds and the storm raged outside.

On his first night he was unable to fall asleep, either because of the cold that pierced his bones despite his three blankets or because of the thoughts that tormented him like needles piercing flesh. As a child he had tried to picture God, and had been freed from childish imaginings only after grasping the meaning of the phrases, "neither body nor in the form of a body" and "no man shall see Me and live." Later, when immersed in the sacred mysteries, he was so enchanted by thoughts of metaphysical essence that it never occurred to him to wonder about the physical form of the Being treated in the Book of the Zohar and the other kabbalistic works. It was only after he had made the decision to go up to *Eretz Yisrael* that he began to ponder the physical appearance of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai and the Ari, as if he first needed to become acquainted with them in his mind before meeting them in his dreams.

He pictured Shimon bar Yohai and his son Eliezer quite clearly. The beards, the earlocks, the eyes, the lines of the face showing through the beard and mustache—all these details appeared to him as if in a living portrait. Only the Ari's image was hard for him to see. Though he found many hints in the writings of the Ari's disciple, Haim Vital, the picture evaded his imagination. A red-headed scholar in his thirties, whose beard and earlocks had never known scissors—how had he appeared as he walked along the alleyways of Safed? And what would he look like now, after his body had turned into dust and ashes in its grave? As for the desire to see all this in his imagination before he saw it in a dream: what was the nature of that desire? And in particular, how could he compel his imagination to see what it was incapable of seeing?

His blanket-wrapped body refused to get warm. Agonizing cold spread from his spine to his toes. His instinct told him that this was nothing external, but something deep inside himself. It was his helpless inability to communicate with the spirit of the Ari, even in his imagination.

The oil wick of a memorial light quivered in one of the tiny bowls of the chandelier. Nahman concentrated his gaze on the glowing spark. How great the darkness, and how faint the light! And then he recalled the effendi from Haifa and his adoring, lustful glances, like a brute beast's. The effendi desired him with a corrupt and corrupting lust. Satan was playing with him and wanted to devour him. It was the lust for prey that was

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implanted in every living creature, the lust to devour which is Satan's love.

But did not he, Nahman, also want to devour Satan, so that he would no longer tempt men to sin? And how could Satan be devoured? By being cast out beyond the outer darkness. But what was the outer darkness? It must be the darkness within us, the dark flaw of the broken vessels. Darkness to darkness, light to light. The unending traffic between sin and holiness, the combination of the elements—*this* was the secret of the broken vessels. When the vessels were mended the combination would come to an end. Holiness would be drawn to holiness, corruption to corruption. There would no longer be a combination of light and darkness but primeval light, the light of Genesis.

SUDDENLY the effendi's voice sounded; he was speaking simple Yiddish in a jeering tone.

"So if man no longer sins and no longer has to overcome the desire to sin, what will be his mission on earth? The entire Torah with all its 613 commandments is built on this urge of man, who is evil from his youth! Take away the urge and you take away the Torah! And what do you want to achieve by mending the broken vessels? A world that is all good, all holy, all light? Your own life on earth is a mixture of good and bad, holiness and corruption, light and darkness. The principle of your life is to wage war with evil and overcome it, and thus to sanctify the Lord! If you did not need to fight, what then of the sanctification of the Lord?"

"Away with you, Satan! It is not Nahman's welfare that concerns you, it's your own skin you're trembling for!" The voice now speaking belonged to the Ari, and, although Nahman was not sure that the Ari spoke Yiddish, it spoke in Yiddish.

"And if I tell you, honored rabbi," replied Satan, "that concern for my own skin is tied up with concern for this scholar's, will you be angry? Yes, I am worried for my survival in the world, but this scholar and I are tied together; the survival of one depends on the other. He and I are like breath and body. Without my corporeality his soul is no more than a current of air, a soul never given breath."

"Better a current of pure air than a soul singed with the sparks of your corruption," said the Ari.

"Let me ask you this, O Rabbi and Master," returned Satan. "Had your own soul not been tarnished with my sparks, would *you* have achieved the secret of the broken vessels? Do the ministering angels, all-holy and all-pure, concern themselves with the secret of Creation and the restoration of the worlds? Throughout their eternal lives they do only one thing: praise and extol and worship and adore the Lord in His power and glory. They have no physical needs as you do. They do not go unto their lawful wives on holy Sabbath eves, they do not cough when they pray, they do not wipe their noses. Perhaps there is, after all, some connection between this and the secret of Creation. Why do you pronounce the blessing, 'Who created man in wisdom,' after you have relieved your physical needs? Perhaps the blessing contains a hint: the wisdom of flesh and blood is *rooted* in its physicality. If there were no physical needs, there would be none of that unending desire, from generation to generation, to mend the primeval flaw. Furthermore, let me remind you that it was not flesh and blood that broke the vessels. The Master of the World Himself did this deed. And if He, so to speak, wished the vessels to be mended, He would not require a creature with physical needs like yourself."

"On this point you are mistaken, father of corruption!" answered the Ari. "For this reason the Creator, blessed be He, made flesh and blood, to mend the flaw of Creation with the holy Torah given on Mount Sinai. The Creator desires the repair to come forth from the flaw itself. That is the secret of perfect restoration. You are incapable of even grasping the concept of perfection, because you yourself are utterly flawed. You are afraid of perfection, for it will destroy you. Why do you hunt this poor scholar who lies shivering here on the bench, if not because of your fear that at my graveside he will discover the secret of the infinitesimal combination? To each weak step he takes, you raise up obstacle after obstacle, all because you fear for your own corrupt skin. None of those contemptible tricks will work. Your end is approaching."

"Are you already rejoicing over my end?" jeered Satan. "Not so fast! What happened to your joy 227 years ago when you, who were then still alive on earth, were sure that you were about to cast me into outer darkness? You groaned like a woman in travail with her first-born because of a pain in your intestines. And who sent that pain to you, if not I myself, by tempting you to mourn the destruction of the Temple by eating thorns for the nine days of mourning in the month of Av. Ha! You were busy mending the broken vessels of Creation and I was busy destroying your intestines. You went down to your grave within five days for the sake of those wretched thorns, and I survive by their grace!"

"You mean it was you who tempted me to mourn by eating thorns?" demanded the Ari. "But how can Satan tempt a Jew to do a holy deed?"

"You have discovered my secret," said Satan. "I tempt innocent men like yourself to fasts and mortifications of the flesh that endanger their health. I love to lay restorers of the world in their graves. We are both well aware that pure and righteous men are not tempted by sin. They are afire with desire for holy deeds. And since I knew how deeply you mourn the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the *Shekhinah*, I caught you in your weakness, the desire to mourn. I whispered

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in your ear the verse: 'Thorns and thistles will grow on their altars,' and you swallowed the verse with the thorns like unripe fruit—ha, ha!"

"Curses on you, Satan!" the Ari shouted. "Now you try the same tricks with this scholar—you tempted him to send his faithful disciple to Jerusalem and come to Safed by himself, with no one to take care of him. You implanted in his heart the wretched notion that the more he deprived his body with cold, hunger, and lack of sleep, the better his chances to achieve illumination and fulfill his sacred dream. You caught his desire for self-affliction and prevailed on him to come here anonymously, so that no one would invite him home for a spoonful of soup or a comfortable bed. You led him toward illness and the grave. You are murdering him just as you murdered me."

"Hush! Don't raise your voice, honored rabbi!" Satan mocked. "The poor scholar might hear you."

"I want him to!" the Ari shouted again. "I want to save him from your corrupt hand! Nahman! Do you hear me? Nahman! Nahman son of Feigel daughter of Hodel! Hear what I say to you! Satan deceives you, he is playing the game he played with me and many others. . . ."

THE scholar awoke as if from a nightmare. His teeth chattered with cold, or with fear. The memorial light flickered as before. Huge shadows quivered inside the synagogue. He sprang from the bench to the water barrel to rinse his hands, wrapped himself in the blankets, and began pacing back and forth to warm his shivering body. He remembered the dream voices clearly. The effendi spoke Yiddish, but in dreams there is no difference between Yiddish and Arabic. In dreams the content is decisive. But who had created the dream, the Ari or the effendi? Logic said that it must be the Ari, for in the dream he warned Nahman against Satan's plots. But perhaps it was the other way around. How was he to know?

The *shamash* came in with a pan of embers and a hot drink. Outside the wind shrieked, firing a hail of rain that concealed the breaking dawn. The *shamash* looked at Nahman with pity. "Refresh your spirits, scholar! Here is honey boiled in water to warm you, and embers to warm your bones. A Jew must husband his strength for the worship of the Creator. People will be coming soon for the dawn service. . . ."

He did not dream of voices again, or see visions, or even entertain deeper, philosophical musings. During the cold days ahead the scholar was obsessed with keeping warm. Heat is light, and light is wisdom and illumination. Having forsaken the light, he sank into a deep melancholy as into an abyss. Satan left him alone, and in about four days even allowed the storm to subside and the sun to emit its rays. The townspeople emerged from their homes like wet frozen chicks to warm themselves in the weak winter light.

The scholar, too, let the sun caress his closed eyelids. For a long time he stood with his face turned up, pondering the combinations of the Name of God like someone testing his memory. He remembered them all. He was most especially aware of the one still missing. If only it would be revealed to him! His heart beat with renewed hope.

On that day he went to prostrate himself at the Ari's tomb. For a long time he stood by the grave, trying to communicate in thought with the Ari's spirit. He looked over at Mount Meron. The sky was blue and clear. The two peaks seemed to him at first like two heads topped with skullcaps, and then like two tarbushes. As soon as that second image presented itself he knew that Satan had forestalled the Ari. He recalled the effendi with his frozen face as vividly as if in a living mirror. Not only did he see him in the flesh, he could also read his thoughts. And what did the effendi think? "Let's see how naive this scholar is, whom I like so much. He believes that if the Ari comes to him in a dream and reveals the secret of that one tiny link which he lacks, he can bring redemption. Why doesn't he ask himself the simple question: if the Ari really knew the secret, how is it that he himself and all those other well-known sages did not bring redemption while they were still alive?"

A shudder ran down the scholar's back. Why had he not thought of this himself? Why did he have to hear it from Satan's lips? He had been certain that these sages had refrained from bringing redemption only because the time was not ripe for it, or because they were forced to refrain, not because it was impossible for the lowly worm that was flesh and blood to restore what the Creator had broken during the act of Creation. This was the power of Satan, to sow doubts in men's minds that would lead them to heresy. Rearranging the letters of the Hebrew word for doubt, *safek*, resulted in the word *pesak*, judgment, the judgment of faith. Today a man doubted some trivial matter; tomorrow he might end by doubting all. And as had been his way since he had first begun to think for himself, he found relief from the pains of skepticism by reciting Psalms in a sweet melody.

It seemed that the scholar was not alone in liking Psalms: the Angel of Winter itself put on a pleasant expression, and sent clear sunny days to the town. Nahman visited the Ari's grave daily, and every encounter with the bright greenery of the landscape ended in his reciting Psalms. The Ari did not reveal himself in dream or reverie. Apparently, he too preferred the verses from the Book of Psalms to any solitary pondering on the Name of God. Satan fled the scholar's illumination. Grass sprang up, sprinkled with flowers, and the flawed world went on as it had always done.

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One night Nahman dreamed he was walking on Mount Meron, his bundle on his back. He was on his way home, happy at what awaited him somewhere over the mountain. Suddenly the effendi came toward him carrying a basket of fruit. The effendi held it out to him with a bow and said, his face lighting up: "Go in peace, beloved guest! You have just learned that your wife and daughters, your students and disciples, await you impatiently. Return to your cozy nest and your friends, speak to them words of Torah and wisdom, for this is why you were created. Forget your idle dreams, and may your journey be crowned with success!"

Nahman took the basket of fruit and was amazed to see that the pomegranates and dates, the figs, apples, pears, and walnuts shone with a strange, inner glow. The thought flashed through his mind: these are the forbidden fruits of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, of which Satan wishes me to eat. He tilted the basket and spilled out the fruits. They rolled down the mountain slope, and as they rolled they turned into snakes, scorpions, and other loathsome creatures.

"Had I been tempted by my greed and eaten them, these abominations would now be writhing in my stomach." The voice was clear and ringing, and it was his own, sounding as if from a distance. The first man who ate of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil had had snakes and scorpions implanted in his soul. The Creator had, as it were, broken the vessels, and the first man had compounded breakage with breakage. Because of that breakage—the deed of Adam, the first man—flesh and blood was unable to mend the divine primeval flaw. That was what the effendi had wanted to prove to him. The stain of the sin of the Tree was marked on every man born of woman; and since he could not cleanse himself of this stain, his hands were incapable of mending the divine primeval flaw.

In other words: before you set out to redeem the world, first redeem yourself. For if you yourself are a broken vessel, how can you restore other broken vessels? The dream gave rise to a proliferation of thoughts. It had come to tell him that he had not yet purified himself, that reptiles and scorpions still scuttled around inside him. He felt beaten, humiliated.

On the following night the Ari came to him again. The dreamer was walking, like someone out for a stroll, in a valley of blossoming trees and twittering birds, a kind of earthly Garden of Eden, and he knew that the Ari was there too with his band of disciples, revealing secrets of the Torah—the secret, in fact, of the Holy Name. But he could not see the disciples and could not hear the Ari's voice. All he saw were blossoming flowers and enormous fruits that glowed and shone like the radiant sky; all he heard was the chirping of the birds.

These sights and sounds brought him ineffable joy: he felt that he was in the Garden of Eden that awaited him in the world to come. Yet he still longed to meet the Ari and his disciples. There was a contradiction between the delight and the desire. Delight signified accepting what there was, being satisfied with his garden; desire meant dissatisfaction with the lot that awaited him in the world to come, and the wish to restore this world below as God's kingdom. He was torn between the two, drawn now this way, now that, and sometimes in both directions simultaneously.

Suddenly he overheard a conversation. He approached, and the closer he drew, the surer he became that he heard the Ari's voice. Again he was speaking in Yiddish. Nahman stopped and listened. He feared to approach too closely lest he disturb the disciples. But the Ari was only repeating well-known themes. As the dreamer listened with great delight, the Ari confirmed things the dreamer himself already knew.

The Ari lowered his voice and began to whisper. In the whisper he expressed new ideas, unknown to the dreamer, combinations that had never occurred to him. The dreamer burned with discovery. He knew that what he was hearing was the great and awesome secret, the key to redemption, and he strained so as not to miss one word of that marvelous whisper. When it ceased the birds began to sing again, and he said to himself: "Master of the World, let me not forget, let me not forget. . . ."

At that moment he awoke. The *shamash* came into the synagogue bringing him a hot drink. Nahman washed his hands upon rising and looked about as if he had come from another world. At that very moment he realized he had forgotten the whisper. He had lost the great secret.

In the days to come, Nahman ceaselessly concentrated his powers in an effort to remember what he had forgotten. He recalled every detail of the dream, he could clearly hear the Ari's voice, but when the Ari began to whisper, Nahman's ears lost their power of hearing. He wept with anger, misery, and despair. Redemption had slipped through his fingers. He searched for some flaw in his own behavior in the dream—as if, in dreaming, we were given a choice as to our actions—but all his efforts were in vain. The fault was not his. It must have been a decree of heaven. Perhaps the time was not ripe; perhaps he was not the chosen emissary.

At length he became resigned to what had happened, and prepared for his journey home. But the sight of the flowering valley with its twittering birds would haunt him, he knew, filling him with rapt awe all the days of his life.

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A New Kind of Democrat?

David Twersky

THE Johnnetta Cole affair began as a fairly straightforward story, but it became important because it was the first real test of the claim Bill Clinton had made during his campaign that he was "a new kind of Democrat."

Dr. Cole, the president of Spelman College in Atlanta, a prestigious school for black women, was appointed to head the Clinton transition "cluster" on education, labor, and the humanities, and was widely thought to be the leading candidate for Secretary of Education. But she was then derailed by stories in the *Forward*, a Jewish weekly in New York, and *Human Events*, a conservative weekly in Washington, which revealed her past association with such organizations as the pro-Castro Venceremos Brigades and the pro-Soviet U.S. Peace Council. Cole was not casually, or only briefly, associated with these groups. She served on the national committee of Venceremos and was listed on the letterhead of the Peace Council as a member of its executive board. Nor had she ever publicly broken with either organization.

As the author of the *Forward* story, I tried unsuccessfully to contact Cole for over a week, but after dodging my calls and faxes, she was finally forced to respond to questions posed by her hometown newspaper, the *Atlanta Constitution*. She did not deny the facts that had been uncovered about her political past. But, her voice "quivering with rage," she did deny that she had ever been a member of a Communist organization, and she said that "right-wing extremists" were targeting her because she had opposed the Vietnam war and the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Cole also accused the *Forward* of being "a right-wing newspaper which I understand to be of a particular form of Zionism." (In fact, the *Forward* had endorsed Clinton.)

But Cole was not a liberal critic of the Vietnam war, like the young Bill Clinton, or a post-Cambodia dove, like Anthony Lake, his new National Security Adviser. She was an out-and-out supporter of the Communist side in that war. Worse yet, when the folk-singer Joan Baez, who had herself been a member of the radical wing of the peace movement, criticized the terrible repressive measures taken by the victorious North Vietnamese after the war was over, Cole signed an open letter denouncing Baez as "immoral" and "arrogant." This document, published as an ad in the *New York Times* and paid for by the U.S. Peace Council, admitted that "some 400,000 servants of the former barbaric regime were sent to reeducation camps," but asked, "Should they not have been reeducated?" The statement further declared that, under Communist rule, "Vietnam now enjoys human rights as it has never known in history."

Nor was Cole's opposition to the Grenada invasion akin to that of some liberal Democrats in Congress. As president of the U.S.-Grenada Friendship Society, she believed that "the U.S. invasion put an end to four years of tremendous progress" under the Marxist dictator Maurice Bishop. Moreover, in an essay distributed by the U.S. Peace Council, she wrote:

> The invasion of the sovereign Black nation of Grenada cannot be divorced from a history of U.S. aggression and genocidal practices against peoples of color around the world. . . .
>
> The hidden agenda of the U.S. government, which seeks to destroy all enemies of corporate America, must also be condemned, most vociferously by the U.S. peace forces.

Those "peace forces" included the Soviet camp and Cuba:

> Regardless of how one views Cuba or the Soviet Union, we must recognize that if it were not for the constraint displayed by these nations in the face of repeated provocations and unlawful actions by the Reagan administration, the invasion of Grenada could have signaled the beginning of a much wider war, with potentially catastrophic results. . . .

As for the pro-Castro Venceremos Brigades, they were, she told the *Atlanta Constitution*, little more than "an educational project that began by sending American youth to cut sugar cane in Cuba and later to build houses." Indeed, this eminent American educator, who endorsed "reeducation camps" in Communist Vietnam, had also long believed that Communist Cuba had much to teach the United States. As she put it in an article in the *Black Scholar* in 1977:

> The major contours of the process of eliminating institutional racism in the U.S. are suggested by the Cuban example. . . .

And she asked, "If it could happen in Cuba, then why not here?"

Finally, she attacked the *Forward* for concluding, "by unbelievable contortions," that she was anti-Israel. Yet those "contortions" included the record of the Peace Council, which, according to Abraham Foxman, the national direc-

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tor of the Anti-Defamation League, was "one of the worst groups in carrying the Soviet, pro-PLO anti-Israel line." They also included her participation in 1985 in a funeral service for Alexandra (Sandy) Pollack, a member of the American Communist party's central committee, a Venceremos veteran, and a founding member of the U.S. Peace Council. Among her fellow participants at this service were representatives of two extremist Palestinian splinter groups, as well as one from the PLO itself. Cole may not have shared all her fellow mourners' views, but there was no indication then—or since—that she deviated from the Peace Council line on Israel.

THE reaction of the Clinton team to the revelations about Cole was to dismiss them with a contemptuous wave of the hand. Dee Dee Myers, who was the top transition press official, told the *New York Times* that the charges were "silly," a sentiment later echoed by the co-chair of the transition, Vernon Jordan. Myers also informed the *Times* that the charges were "something we're just not concerned about." Mark Gearen, a close aide to the new Vice President, told me that the story was "an unfair smear." Days before he was named Deputy National Security Adviser, Samuel Berger said that the whole business concerned "the distant past," while a transition press aide, Marla Romash, called the inquiry "terrible—going back 40 years to days I thought were finished."

But Cole's pro-Castro activities extended up to the mid-80's, and it was not 40 but only eight years ago that she made a speech praising Herbert Aptheker, the veteran Communist-party theoretician, for "develop[ing] quality scholarship in opposition to the ideas put forward against the peoples' movements."

Except perhaps for her use of this kind of language (similar in style to her denunciation of the *Forward*), Johnnetta Cole does not conform to a Marxist-Leninist stereotype. Despite her sympathy for "all enemies of corporate America," she sits on many corporate boards, including Coca-Cola, Citizens and Southern Georgia Corporation, the parent company of the C&S National Bank in Georgia, the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, the Atlanta Children's Shelter Inc., and the Atlanta Symphony. And during her tenure as president of Spelman, the college has been awarded grants by the Dow Jones Corporation and the DeWitt Wallace Foundation. (It should also be mentioned that in Atlanta she has built a strong reputation working on intergroup problems, and that she has an excellent reputation in the Atlanta Jewish community.)

In addition to her other assets, Cole has many connections with the Clinton circle. Hillary Clinton's close friend, Marion Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund, has been a Spelman board member, and Donna Shalala, the new Secretary of Health and Human Services, has been a Spelman trustee.

NEVERTHELESS, Cole's record is her record, and the fact that, once exposed, it should have been considered "irrelevant" by the Clinton team did nothing to dispel the idea that, as Rowland Evans and Robert Novak put it in their syndicated column:

> The Clinton administration is truly a big tent that extends to the farthest Left boundaries of the Democratic party.

In his column in the *New York Post*, Eric Breindel spelled out the implications:

> If she is given a major post—or continues to enjoy influence in the transition process—the message will be inescapable: the President-elect and his advisers will be signaling that they aren't interested in distinguishing between a Left-liberal and someone who cast her lot with the cause of Communist totalitarianism.
>
> Such a message would have profound implications. The death of international Communism hasn't generally been understood to mean that its sympathizers now have a place in the Democratic party. After all, the demise of European fascism didn't confer political legitimacy on Americans who admired Hitler and Mussolini. . . .
>
> Creating a Big Tent is one thing. Making room for disciples of Fidel Castro is something else. Opposition to all forms of totalitarianism—believing in democracy—seems a reasonable ideological prerequisite for helping pick the members of any new U.S. government.

Another columnist, Carl Rowan, vehemently disagreed. In a piece which may have set a record for political absurdity, he declared:

> She is being attacked now because she saw chances of peace with the Soviet Union long before Ronald Reagan and George Bush embraced Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and before Bush and Bob Strauss began to plead for U.S. economic aid to Boris Yeltsin and Russia. Is it traitorous for an educator of conscience to be smarter than politicians?

Rowan also played the race card:

> In black America . . . Cole is regarded as a national treasure. I and millions of other black people are offended and outraged by this campaign to portray her as something other than the wise patriot that she is.

Others tried to link the affair with black-Jewish relations. Because a Jewish paper had broken the story, and because questions had been raised about Cole's attitude toward Israel, her friends in the Atlanta Jewish community felt called upon to rush to her defense. Jesse Jackson also got into the act, charging that "Jewish complaints" had damaged Cole's chances for a cabinet appointment. But all this was a diversion from the main issue, which was Cole's association with pro-Communist groups, her unwillingness to say whether and how she had altered her views, and the failure of the Clinton team to take those views seriously.

IN THE end, Bill Clinton did not go along with those of his own advisers who still supported Cole for a cabinet position. Nor did he

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seem to endorse the view of her as a "wise patriot." Yet neither did he drop her from his transition team. Evidently, though a person "who cast her lot with the cause of Communist totalitarianism" was not considered fully fit by Clinton to sit in the cabinet, she was still considered qualified to be an important member of his transition team.

In an interview with *Rolling Stone* during the campaign, Clinton said he intended to break some of the eggs in his party's basket. But the inconclusive finale to the Cole affair leaves open the questions of just which eggs Clinton had in mind and just what he means when he calls himself "a new kind of Democrat."

The Limits of Term Limits

Terry Eastland

ASIDE from Bill Clinton's victory, certainly the biggest news on election day was the huge support won by the term-limits movement. Measures limiting the terms of members of Congress were on the ballot in fourteen states, and in all fourteen they won, only in the state of Washington by less than a landslide.

Of the fifteen states now in favor of term limits (Colorado was the first, in 1990), eleven would prevent members of Congress from running for reelection after they have served a certain number of years or terms (although their names could still be written in); the remaining four would prevent a Senator or Representative from serving more than twelve years, period. Advocates of term limits have targeted eight additional states for popular initiatives. The movement's ultimate goal, now a serious possibility, is a constitutional amendment.

Of course, Americans already have the power to vote out incumbents. But, perhaps to the movement's dismay, on election day the people did not exercise that power; instead, they returned 93 percent of current officeholders seeking reelection. The contradiction here is akin to the familiar one concerning federal spending: Americans seem to want to reduce spending in general but not when it comes to particular cases.

That contradiction and others are treated in two new books which, with exquisite timing, were published just before the election: *Restoration: Congress, Term Limits, and the Recovery of Deliberative Democracy* by the syndicated columnist George F. Will* and *Cleaning House: America's Campaign for Term Limits* by a former Congressman, James K. Coyne, and a *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer, John H. Fund.† The two books ably discuss the movement and offer most of the best arguments for term limitation. They also prompt reflection on how difficult it already is and will remain to limit not merely congressional terms but the big government that has evolved in this century.

THE modern term-limits movement—its predeccessor in 1947 resulted in the 22nd Amendment, restricting to two the number of terms a President may serve—caught fire after the congressional election of 1988, in which all but one Senate and six House incumbents were successfully reelected in the highest return rate in American history. Anti-Congress feeling was further fueled when, upon taking office, the new Congress tried to give itself a 51-percent pay raise without a roll-call vote.

The reasons behind today's widespread contempt for Congress are well known: the large staffs, the multiple offices, the free travel allowances, the generous pensions, the fat campaign coffers, the use of free mailing privileges—all combined with the refusal to abide by laws imposed on others. Then, too, there is the institution's "do-nothing" image: "to many voters," write Coyne and Fund, "it seemed that the typical Congressman was only concerned about his career, his pay raise, and his perks."

In 1989, after Congress was racked by major-league scandals, groups formed around the country in support of measures to limit not only federal but also state- and even local-government (city and county) terms. This past November, in addition to the fourteen measures limiting U.S. congressional terms, there were 42 other term-limits proposals on the ballot, and all but one passed—suggesting that majorities of voters think limiting terms is a good idea

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* Free Press, 260 pp., $19.95.

† Regnery Gateway, 235 pp., $21.95.

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regardless of the level of government.

When the new Congress convenes, more than a quarter of the Senate and nearly a third of the House will be serving while a clock begins to tick. Incumbents in three states governed by such a clock have objected with lawsuits—their argument is that the Constitution specifies only age, citizenship, and residency as qualifications for members of Congress—and they may win in the courts. But with such large majorities in so many states on the other side (and with more probably still to speak), the politics of the issue are running the other way. Incumbents will find it especially hard if their opposition to term limits is seized on by challengers as a campaign issue. All in all, the likelihood is that Congress will send to the states a proposed constitutional amendment limiting terms, possibly before the next congressional election.

WHAT would be the effect of such an amendment? Under a version limiting terms to, say, three for Representatives and two for Senators (the arrangement most commonly suggested), there would be a complete turnover in the membership within six years for the House and twelve years for the Senate. The House and the Senate would thus change hands more rapidly than at any time since the last century, when most members served just one term and 40 to 50 percent of the seats changed hands in every election. Today, the average congressional career is about ten years (double what it was at the start of the century), and the number of freshmen entering Congress has declined to roughly 10 percent.

Seen in this perspective, term limitation is an effort to go back to the future—back to a time when there were more contests among newcomers. And there is something intuitively appealing about this effort, for it taps into what George Will calls "the democratic faith in the broad diffusion in the public of the talents necessary for the conduct of the public's business." It is also true that having more contests among newcomers necessarily will work to the advantage of all of those not in power who want to serve, and this no doubt is one reason polls show big majorities of women and racial and ethic minorities in favor of term limitations.

The prospect of more open seats could also benefit the political parties. According to David W. Brady and Douglas Rivers, professors of political science at Stanford University, one effect of the "perpetual incumbency machine" which Congress has become has been to transform a party-based politics into one of personality. Theoretically, term limits could restore to the parties the saliency they once enjoyed in voters' consciousness. Of course, there is no guarantee that the parties would take advantage of this opportunity; but in an age when parties have declined, they would be foolish not to.

There are those—some opponents of term limits are among them—who believe that the Democrats, having the greater number of incumbents, would have more to lose from term limits while the Republicans would have more to gain. And it is true that the Republican platforms in both 1988 and 1992 supported term limits, while the Democratic platforms did not. Still, since 1980 Democrats have won slightly more of the contests for open seats than have Republicans—so it would seem that, on the long view, Democrats have nothing to fear.

A weightier argument is that, by definition, term limits would end up restricting voter choice. Such, according to opponents of the measure, was the understanding of some of the original Founders. Alexander Hamilton, for example, asserted that reeligibility for office

> is necessary to enable the people, when they see reason to approve of [the official's] conduct, to continue him in the station in order to prolong the utility of his talents and virtues, and to secure to the government the advantage of permanency in a wise system of administration.

Supporters of term limits like Coyne, Fund, and Will concede that Hamilton—and Madison, who argued along similar lines—were right in their time; but times are different. During the 19th century, they say, legislators did more of what the Framers thought they should do—deliberate the merits of public policy. Today legislators spend much more of their time serving as middlemen, making calls in behalf of their constituents to the many federal departments and agencies charged with administering the law. Easily able to be reelected to a job that pays well and has excellent perks and plentiful staff, members have little incentive to retire voluntarily, in the manner of their 19th-century forebears, but instead serve on and on.

WHETHER term limits would significantly alter congressional behavior and make Congress a more deliberative body is hard to judge. Legislators who know with certainty that they will be leaving Congress (and will have to live under the laws they have passed) might be more disposed, as Will puts it, to "discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate functions for the federal government." On the other hand, term-limited Congressmen could be as self-serving as many of those we have now, bending the modern state to their own needs all the way through their final term of office.

Term limits would almost certainly affect the so-called Iron Triangle spawned by the welfare state—in which congressional committees, career bureaucrats, and the various interest groups cooperate in the distribution of benefits to the public; but what the impact would be is unclear. Chairmanships of committees and subcommittees would change more rapidly, of course, but would term-limited chairmen be less personally ambitious or act more responsibly than chairmen in the past? The net effect might be to confer greater power on committee staffers or on careerists in the executive departments and agencies; a

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movement to limit the tenure of bureacrats has yet to make its appearance.

In brief, the benefits of the reform are in danger of being oversold. Under term limits, more new faces would come to Congress more quickly than they do now, and political parties would have more opportunities to assert themselves. But no one can say to what extent, if any, the regrettable aspects of legislative service would be reduced and deliberativeness promoted in a term-limited Congress.

As THESE two books make clear, today's legislative careerism is made possible by what the federal government has become. Originally restricted in the objects it could reach, Washington is now hardly prevented at all from touching, and spending money upon, whatever it will. For Coyne and Fund, term limits would confront this problem directly; the movement, for them, is a legacy of Reaganism, and is "about" limited government in general. But it is hard to see how a measure that affects only tenure in office, as opposed to the powers exercised in office, could markedly alter the nature of modern government. It is also too much to expect that term limits would limit what people now routinely ask of their representatives.

For the fact is that the American people have changed, too. Even if they sometimes recognize that it may not be good for them or their posterity, they *like* the big government in Washington. Twelve years of Ronald Reagan and George Bush—the most conservative Presidents since Calvin Coolidge—resulted not in a downsizing of the federal government but in its continued expansion. The Department of Education, which Reagan originally vowed to abolish, is still there, bigger than ever; the Department of Veterans Affairs was established under him.

Nor did these two Republican administrations really press for structural reforms aimed at limiting government power or its exercise. A Reagan task force on federalism wound up deciding *not* to recommend a constitutional amendment saying, in effect, that the only powers the federal government has are the powers enumerated in the Constitution. Nor did it recommend an amendment enabling a majority of the states to veto federal legislation within a certain period after its enactment.

Those who look to term limits to restrict the government's exercise of its powers need first to look to themselves. George Will puts his finger on the problem when he writes, on the final page of his book, "Americans must be less demanding of government." If they were, incumbents might not be demanding to stay in office as long as they now do.

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Double Standard

PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS: THE FAILURE OF RACE RELATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA. By JARED TAYLOR. *Carroll & Graf. 416 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

THE election of Bill Clinton has, among other things, confounded predictions that racial division would ensure Republican control of the White House for at least the rest of this century. Race, in fact, was a non-issue in the campaign; white concerns about welfare, crime, affirmative action, the behavior of the urban poor, and other racially tinged problems were far overshadowed by apprehensions about the country's economic condition, fear of the budget deficit, and nervousness over the rising cost of medical care.

If anxiety over American decline was principally responsible for pushing race and other social issues to the margins of the campaign, Clinton's shrewdly plotted strategy must be given credit as well. He deftly neutralized the welfare issue—which some observers early on saw as the central question of the election—by promising a bold program to curtail welfare as a "way of life." He repeatedly invoked the theme of Americans exercising personal responsibility in their private lives if they were to benefit from the generosity of the government. And he treated Jesse Jackson in a manner that, given Jackson's prominence in the Democratic party, could only be described as humiliating, accurately calculating that the alienation of Jackson would not cost him the loyalty of other, less controversial, black leaders.

Clinton's goal was to erase the image of the Democrats as the party of the double standard, the party in which blacks and whites were judged by different norms, racial quotas were championed, and the word "compassion" was interpreted to mean spending public funds to support an urban underclass widely seen as sexually irresponsible and uninterested in work.

That Clinton was successful in recapturing the allegiance of disenchanted white voters—the so-called Reagan Democrats—while maintainng the overwhelming and apparently enthusiastic support of blacks is certainly a tribute to his skill as a candidate. But as President, he is sure to find the challenge of sustaining the support of this diverse coalition much more formidable, and most likely impossible. Impossible because of the degree to which the double standard has become entrenched both in government policy and in the attitudes of America's political and cultural elites.

It is precisely this which Jared Taylor sets himself to attack in *Paved With Good Intentions*, a sustained polemic against the tendency to ascribe racial inequality to white prejudice, the refusal to hold blacks accountable for their personal behavior, and the search for justifications to provide guaranteed slots for blacks throughout the country's institutions.

At its best, *Paved With Good Intentions* accurately reflects the indignation shared by many who believe that the way America is dealing with its racial difficulties is unfair and self-defeating. At *his* best, Taylor exhibits an admirable tenacity as a researcher, supporting his theme that a racial double standard pervades and corrupts American life with a vast assemblage of studies and anecdotes.

But like most polemics, this one also has its weaknesses—and rather considerable ones at that. Taylor does not seem familiar with the historical processes which have led us to today's deplorable state of affairs. Furthermore, he seems unable to distinguish between ideas which pose a genuine threat to fair play and individual rights and extreme proposals dug up from obscure sources whose chances of adoption are practically nonexistent. Finally, he judges as equally obnoxious social policies like enterprise zones, drafted to deal with real issues of inequality, and those measures (like race-norming) put forward simply to purchase social peace.

THE best, and most disturbing, chapters in this book are those dealing with the criminal-justice system. Ever since the civil-rights revolution, blacks and many liberal whites have portrayed that system as rigged from top to bottom against blacks, especially young black males. In response to these charges, extraordinary efforts have been made to purge the system of bias. Big-city police departments have scrapped tests and instituted quotas to ensure that more blacks are hired and promoted. Black mayors have been elected in part to restore the black community's faith in the system of law enforcement. The exclusion of blacks from juries has been invalidated.

Now Taylor has come up with considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that if blacks were once treated unfairly by the criminal-justice system, today it is often black criminals and lawyers who have become adept at exploiting racial sensitivities. Where white defendants in the South could once rely on the racial solidarity of white jurors, it is now the attorneys of accused blacks who address racial appeals to heavily black juries, with sometimes unsettling results. Among cases mentioned by Taylor are those of Larry Davis, who was acquitted by an all-minority New York City jury after having shot and wounded five policemen, and Marion Barry, the former Washington, D.C. mayor, who was handed a light sentence on drug-use charges by a jury whose black members openly made race a consideration in reaching a verdict.

Taylor does not shrink from

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challenging the sacred notion that occasional incidents of race-related murder of blacks by whites signify a pervasive atmosphere of prejudice. He argues convincingly that the two best-known New York City incidents—the killing of black youths in the Howard Beach section of Queens and Bensonhurst in Brooklyn—prove practically nothing about the state of black-white relations. Indeed, far from fitting into a pattern, these two incidents were highly unusual, a fact which helps explain the media attention paid to them. According to national crime statistics, cases in which groups of whites assault or kill blacks are rather rare in America today. And Taylor further notes that while race was an element in both Howard Beach and Bensonhurst, other, nonracial issues were also at play. In neither instance were marauding whites intent on killing the first innocent black they encountered.

Nor, Taylor reminds us, is racial violence limited to white-on-black assault. He cites several instances in which groups of blacks set out to maim or kill whites, in circumstances much like those surrounding Howard Beach and Bensonhurst. In one chilling case, a black cult required new recruits to murder a white in order to gain full membership. But not one of these cases drew the attention of the national media, and Taylor suggests that in some instances the local political leadership conspired with the media to ensure that the racial aspect of the incident was minimized.

PROCEEDING a step further, Taylor hints at a deliberate attempt to obscure the wild disproportion between black-on-white and white-on-black crime. According to figures compiled by the FBI, for example, in 1988 there were over 9,400 cases of black-on-white rape, whereas there were fewer than ten rape cases reported in which blacks were the victims of whites. Similar if less dramatic statistics are cited for such crimes as murder and gang robbery.

Despite the many cases of black-on-white violent crime, questions are seldom asked in any particular instance as to whether race was the motive. Yet clearly race *is* a factor in most such crimes, at least insofar as whites are wealthier and therefore more lucrative targets for robbery and mayhem. Taylor, in any event, seems to be arguing not so much for careful scrutiny of every interracial crime for evidence of bias as for an end to the double standard which predominates today, and, although he does not specifically advocate it, a dose of benign neglect on racial affairs.

In short, looking at Taylor's statistics, news accounts, and evaluations, one is hard-pressed to resist the conclusion that the old stereotype of brutal whites robbing, beating, and killing black men and raping black women has been reversed, so that today it is whites who most fear the criminal depredation of blacks. And at least some of these crimes, it would appear from Taylor's book, take place in a system in which black criminal defendants get off as free as Southern nightriders in the days of segregation.

THE political repercussions of racial polarization during the coming period are difficult to gauge. But it is worth noting that Clinton's showing among white voters was less than impressive. Blacks, in fact, were crucial to the new President's election, and black political leaders are, if anything, more committed than the black electorate at large to the distribution of resources along racial lines. These leaders have gained added power through the expansion of the black and Hispanic congressional delegations, itself a product of precisely the kind of racial gerrymandering that Taylor finds one of the more objectionable examples of racial double standards.

Meanwhile, Taylor has unearthed signs of what may be a new, emerging phenomenon: the banding-together of whites to defend their interests. He cites white caucuses in police departments and corporations to fight what are seen as the unfair consequences of affirmative action. White-power groups have also been formed by prison

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inmates, not, as in the past, to terrorize black prisoners, but as a means of defense against assault and sexual molestation, of which whites have become special targets.

That whites are emulating the tactics of minorities in seeking rewards and protection is hardly inspiriting news. But we can anticipate an acceleration of this trend as long as society sends the corrosive message that in America, appeals to race ultimately pay off.

Mediator

QUIET DIPLOMAT: A BIOGRAPHY OF MAX M. FISHER. By PETER GOLDEN. *Cornwall Books. 564 pp. $24.50.*

Reviewed by LEONARD GARMENT

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, I began working in the White House as special consultant to President Richard Nixon. Not long after my arrival, I was given some assignments in Middle East affairs by Nixon and his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger. I soon discovered that working on Middle East policy meant working with Max Fisher, who was at once a leader of the organized American Jewish community, a major Republican fund-raiser, and a man who had the President's ear. Since that time, Fisher has been a colleague and close friend.

This relationship would ordinarily not recommend me as a reviewer of Peter Golden's *Quiet Diplomat*, an authorized biography of Fisher, but in this case there are two special circumstances. First, Fisher's role in some of the episodes described in this meticulously researched and gracefully written book was known to only a few people at the time the events occurred. On a number of occasions I was one of those people and can thus offer a semi-informed opinion. Second, the book is not about Fisher alone; instead, it gives us a concrete view of the emergence of American Jews into the mainstream of national politics since World War II.

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Fisher, born in 1909 to a middle-class Jewish family with its roots in Eastern Europe, grew up in a small Ohio town, and went to Ohio State on an athletic scholarship. By the time he was graduated, he had developed a determination to make money, a preference for working behind the scenes, and a passion for consensus. Even then, his personality was marked by an unusual reticence and detachment; his most striking physical qualities were his imposing size and even more imposing energies. All these served him well in the quasi-public life he later chose to lead.

During the Depression, Fisher's father managed to buy a plant in Detroit that reprocessed used automobile crankcase oil. Fisher, just out of college, went to work there and built the business almost literally quart by quart. By the end of World War II, the firm was one of the biggest independent petroleum companies in the Midwest. In 1959, Fisher sold it. He was left with a large fortune, plenty of spare time, and an inclination to pursue new interests.

By this point in his life, Fisher had already become a champion fund-raiser for Jewish causes in Detroit—so good that the non-Jewish philanthropies, traditionally closed to Jews, sought his help. He even developed a close friendship with Henry Ford (the younger). By 1965 Fisher had been both general chairman of the United Jewish Appeal (he was the first person of East European ancestry to hold the post) and vice chairman of the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF). He would become CJF president in 1969. He would also become chairman of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency as well as chairman of the National Executive Council of the American Jewish Committee.

In 1967, during the Six-Day War, Fisher led the effort that in one month raised $100 million for Israel from the American Jewish community. The total for the year was $240 million in donations, plus $190 million in bonds.

In the United States, the same Six-Day War that had opened the pocketbooks of American Jews also turned more Jewish political energies to Israel and moved American Jews to pay more attention to attitudes held by U.S. politicians toward the Middle East. President Lyndon Johnson, with his reluctance to supply military equipment to Israel, became suspect to some. The civil unrest of the late 1960's and the anti-Semitism of some black militants increased the erosion of traditional Jewish loyalty to the Democratic party. This situation was an opportunity for Fisher, who had become active in Republican politics as a fund-raiser for his friend, Governor George Romney of Michigan.

WHEN Richard Nixon won the 1968 Republican presidential nomination, Fisher joined his campaign. He became an adviser to Nixon, established a "Jewish desk" in the campaign organization, and set a precedent in having Nixon meet with the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. Nixon's important "tilting"-toward-Israel speech, delivered to a B'nai B'rith convention in September 1968, came to pass in part because of Fisher's advocacy. He also persuaded Nixon not to support the Republican filibuster against Johnson's nomination of Abe Fortas to the Supreme Court's then traditional "Jewish seat."

The role Fisher played in the Nixon administration was unprecedented. Other Presidents had taken counsel with Jewish advisers, but Fisher was the first clear organizational leader of the American Jewish community to have significant access to a President. During the next twenty years, Fisher was the perpetual mediator—between Republican administrations and the government of Israel and between Republican administrations and American Jewish organizations. He also tended his financial gardens carefully—in part to make money, in part to keep busy between crises, and in principal part to enlarge the universe of *machers*, both Jews and Gentiles, whom he could summon to support his political missions.

In 1969, when Nixon's first Secretary of State, William Rogers, unveiled his controversial ideas for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli

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conflict, Fisher—though unhappy that he had not been briefed in advance—undertook (accurately) to assure anxious American Jewish leaders that Nixon had no intention of pressing Israel to pursue the Rogers Plan.

In 1971, Fisher was part of the persuading, dealing, and message-carrying that shook loose some essential American aircraft for Israel. During the Yom Kippur War of 1973, Fisher lobbied the President and Henry Kissinger nonstop (estimate: at least 100 phone calls) for rapid resupply of the Israelis.

In addition, he helped move the U.S. government to intercede with the Soviets in behalf of two Jews sentenced to death for trying to escape to Israel. He also worked hard to get some Soviet movement on the issue of Jewish emigration. This attempt was part of his unsuccessful effort to head off the passage of the Jackson-Vanik amendment (estimate: another 100 phone calls), which Fisher thought would curtail Jewish emigration instead of encouraging it. In 1991, more happily, he helped persuade the U.S. government to produce, through its own immigration rules and its negotiations with the Soviets, a large and steady flow of Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel.

In 1975, Fisher played a pivotal part in staving off what could have been the worst crisis in U.S.-Israel history, the threatened Ford-Kissinger "reassessment" of the entire relationship between the two countries. I was an eyewitness to this drama, which was played out in Jerusalem and Washington in a series of private meetings among Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, President Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger, and Fisher. When the negotiations and explanations were over, President Ford, in his nationally televised "state-of-the-world" speech to Congress, exorcised the ominous specter of reassessment—partly in the text of the speech and partly by having Fisher sit with the Ford family in the gallery of the House of Representatives.

Later, in 1981, Fisher tried to head off the Jewish community's confrontation with the Reagan administration over the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia and attempted to get Israel to give some sort of positive response to the 1982 Reagan Plan. Finally, in 1989, Fisher tried to turn President George Bush away from the path of confrontation with Israel over the issue of West Bank settlements.

During these years, some Jewish-community leaders were always accusing Fisher of having become a "court Jew" who sold out any real influence he might have had in order to support his Republican friends and to garner personal power and prestige. This criticism was generally inspired by its own familiar brand of jealousy and political partisanship, but it raises the legitimate question of just how effective Fisher's influence was.

In the Nixon administration, Fisher was certainly listened to. Nixon felt a certain kinship with Fisher, since both of them were outsiders to the political and financial environments in which they operated. Nixon understood that helping the administration would sometimes back Fisher into a difficult political corner, and the President tried, where he could, to take compensating actions that strengthened Fisher's hand in the Jewish community. Nixon also felt that Fisher's economic insight and common-sense shrewdness were useful antitoxins to the conventional advice of the White House technicians who surrounded him.

With Watergate, Fisher's influence increased significantly, because Gerald Ford was the President with whom Fisher was the closest in a personal sense. It is in the Ford administration that Fisher's mark was clearest. The two men, both Michigan Republicans, shared a style and a political past.

When the Republicans returned to power after the Carter years, the picture became less clear. The Reagan administration was certainly pro-Israel in its overall stance; Fisher was close to President Reagan's first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, and even closer to Haig's successor, George Shultz. But his status had begun to change. As President Reagan put it fondly, Fisher had become such a White House institution that Republican Presidents "inherited him." Meanwhile, the AWACS sale was an early sign of a new distance from Israel on the part of a number of U.S. officials who were not comfortable with Fisher or his advice.

During the Bush years, Fisher spent a great deal of time trying to mediate between the President and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. But the distance between the Bush administration and Israel was rooted in attitudes that were not susceptible of discussion. No mediator could bridge the gulf.

The substance was not bad—loan guarantees in place, Arab-Israeli talks under way—but the rhetoric was a politically disastrous hash. And the culminating event, the allocation of a prime-time Republican convention spot to Patrick J. Buchanan, he of the anti-Israel, anti-Semitic effusions, to deliver an unedited call for a domestic *jihad* against sin, was just what was needed to frighten wandering Jews back to the seemingly safe harbor of the Democratic party.

The story is told by the statistics on the percentage of the Jewish vote to go Republican in the presidential elections in which Fisher participated. In 1968, it was 16 percent for Nixon; in 1972, Nixon received about 35 percent of the Jewish vote. Ford lost in 1976, but he received about 34 percent of the Jewish vote. In 1984 and 1988, the figure dropped to about 30 percent. And in the 1992 presidential election, George Bush got only about 12 percent of the Jewish vote.

It may be that what is required for a close relationship between an administration and the Jewish community is not only a man of Fisher's temperament to ease the way but high officials whose politics sit on a firm substratum of support for the values that a Max Fisher represents. This visceral support no longer seems secure among Republicans, and we have yet to see how solid it is among the new Democrats. Perhaps American politics will soon force Israel to undertake its own "reassessment" of the relationship that flourished

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in the days when Fisher and friends were assured a serious hearing in the Oval Office.

Meanwhile, Fisher can, if he chooses, look back with personal satisfaction at Israel's survival through two wars, the Soviet Jews streaming into that country, and a U.S.-Israel relationship that stayed alive on his watch. Such accomplishments, to which Fisher was instrumental, are a considerable legacy. And at eighty-five, though Fisher is entitled to give himself and his fabulous phone finger a rest, I doubt that he will.

There is a post-publication irony that deserves mention. Even as presidential power was passing from Republicans to Democrats, the role of Fisher family diplomat was passing from father Max to daughter Mary, whose 1992 Republican-convention speech, revealing that she is HIV-positive, caused a public stir in a way her father, for all his history-making accomplishments, could never match. It signaled that the time of the quiet diplomat may be over: that public issues, large and small, will now be settled by public argument, public style, and public theater. Though there will still be a place for the Max Fishers in back-channel diplomacy, it will be sharply reduced. Should we cheer? I think not.

Culture and the Subculture

CAN POETRY MATTER? ESSAYS ON POETRY AND AMERICAN CULTURE. By DANA GIOIA. *Graywolf Press. 256 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by
CHRISTOPHER CLAUSEN

WHAT audience still exists for poetry in contemporary America? Or, to put it less optimistically, why is poetry today largely confined to what Dana Gioia describes as a "subculture" in university English departments? Why does the educated public that reads serious magazines and continues to enjoy quality fiction no longer, on the whole, pay much attention to living poets? These questions have often been asked in recent years—including notably by Joseph Epstein in "Who Killed Poetry?" (COMMENTARY, August 1988)—but seldom with as much penetration and knowledge of the literary world outside the university as Gioia brings to them here.

Since the appearance in 1986 of his first book of poems, *Daily Horoscope*, Dana Gioia has become something of a prodigy in American letters. His essays have appeared in the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Hudson Review*, and other magazines that reach well beyond the academic world that most contemporary poets inhabit. When the title essay of this volume appeared in the *Atlantic* in 1991, it inspired hundreds of letters, not only from infuriated members of the poetry "subculture" but also from those presumably mythical beings, general readers who would gladly read more poetry if there were more poets writing for a non-coterie audience.

In fact, Gioia assures us, there are such poets; part of the problem is that few people ever hear of them. The reviewing of poetry in most newspapers and general-circulation magazines is a thing of the past. Even the *Times Book Review* rarely deigns to notice new poetry, and when it does so the result is almost always a one-page omnibus review of volumes by three separate poets. Furthermore, the poets who get noticed are nearly always those whose work appeals to (and emanates from) the subculture of writing programs. Although Gioia does not make this point, the reviewing of poetry in nonacademic publications has become very much like the publication of poetry by commercial houses: an occasional activity carried on because it presumably still garners some prestige, not because anyone thinks there is an audience that really cares about the stuff.

Instead of an audience outside the universities, we have M.F.A. programs inside them. In the decades since Randall Jarrell, himself a poet (and critic), ruefully observed that God had given the modern poet students to keep the wolf from the door but simultaneously taken away his readers, the whole operation has been put on an almost industrial footing. "The proliferation of literary journals and presses over the past 30 years," Gioia writes,

> has been a response less to an increased appetite for poetry among the public than to the desperate need of writing teachers for professional validation. Like subsidized farming that grows food no one wants, a poetry industry has been created to serve the interests of the producers and not the consumers. And in the process the integrity of the art has been betrayed.

Gioia is himself that rare thing, an American poet who exists outside the university. Until recently he was a vice president of General Foods, and he writes feelingly about the careers of such businessmen-poets as T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, L.E. Sissman, and Ted Kooser. "The campus," he points out, "is not a bad place for a poet to work. It's just a bad place for all poets to work."

But things were not always so. Before World War II, the university poet was a rarity. Particularly in New York, there was a world of letters—of publishing houses, magazines, literary journalism, theaters, and lecturing—where a poet was not wholly alien and could at least scrape by. Furthermore, poets as different as Robert Frost, Stephen Vincent Benet, Vachel Lindsay, and Edna St. Vincent Millay had large nonacademic audiences and were regularly discussed in the general-interest press. With the debatable exception of Frost, none of these poets is widely studied in universities today, or even much represented in recent anthologies.

What difference does it make how a poet pays his bills? For one thing, it means that the poetry itself grows out of a narrower range of experience than in the past. If nearly all poets were farmers, or accountants, or worked in the Social Security Administration, the limiting effects on their art would be obvious. As it is, the only thing that obscures the narrow bound-

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aries of an art whose practitioners are too much alike is the fact that nearly all their readers are also faculty members or students in writing programs.

Then there's the McPoem effect, aptly named by Donald Hall to describe the kind of poem that university workshops often encourage. A minimalist free-verse lyric aping the most currently fashionable models, it simply endorses the present state of the art and accredits its author as a member in good standing of the subculture, ready for a job teaching others to write the same thing. But as Gioia points out, free verse and minimalism are not themselves the problem. The similarity of effort, the imitativeness, the need to publish rapidly for tenure and promotion, the in-group reviewing and reading circuits—all these consequences of adapting an art to academic circumstances have combined to reduce its range, power, and audience.

AS ANYONE discovers who writes on these matters, however, another world of American poetry still survives outside the universities, even more invisible than the subculture Gioia anatomizes so well. A decade ago I published a book entitled *The Place of Poetry* that tried to analyze the decline of poetry's audience and cultural influence. I anticipated cries of outrage and denial from academic poets, and I was not disappointed. But a large volume of mail came from people far outside universities—men and women in every part of the country who had been writing poetry for years and hoped I could help them get it published, or at least confirm their belief that poems for a nonprofessional audience *should* be published.

Most of their poems were bad—but with a badness completely unlike the badness of so much of what does get published. Usually, though not invariably, they employed rhyme, meter, and traditional forms like the sonnet. Their subjects, too, were personal experiences that fell within the traditional matter of poetry—love, death, war (many of my correspondents were veterans), children. Usually their poetry had something to say, even if often not well, and collectively it communicated a sense of tremendous human variety. Half a century ago the best of these poets would have found publishers.

Supposing they did find publishers, would they find an audience today? They might, but a more profitable question is whether poetry that was at the same time more sophisticated than theirs and more broadly based in experience than most of what comes out of universities could reclaim some of the audience and influence poets have lost in the 20th century. The New Formalists, a movement with which Gioia has been identified and which he discusses in two of his chapters, have been working for about fifteen years on the assumption that it can.

The infelicitous name implies that these poets write in traditional forms rather than free verse, which is not always true (Gioia himself has written both kinds of poems), but makes them controversial in writing programs. As he tells us:

> At odds with the small but established institutional audience for new poetry, these young writers imagined instead readers who loved literature and the arts but had either rejected or never studied contemporary poetry. This was not the mass audience of television or radio, for whom the written word was not a primary means of information. It was an audience of prose readers—intelligent, educated, and sophisticated individuals who, while no longer reading poetry, enjoyed serious novels, film, drama, jazz, dance, classical music, painting, and the other modern arts.

Such diverse poets as Frederick Turner, Timothy Steele, Charles Martin, Wyatt Prunty, and Vikram Seth—some of them academics, others not—have experimented not only with form but with content, attempting, among other things, to revive narrative poetry. Their most ambitious goal is to reconnect poetry with a wider world. In 1986 Seth published *The Golden Gate*, a novel in verse that actually became a best-seller. Gioia's own second collection, *The Gods of Winter* (1991), contains briefer narratives and made a considerable splash in England.

DESPITE its author's affiliations, *Can Poetry Matter?* is not a manifesto. As a well-informed, undoctrinaire study of the present situation of American poetry, it makes its points with engaging modesty and bestows praise according to no ideological formula. It is not surprising to find that Gioia admires Elizabeth Bishop and Wallace Stevens, two poets who are almost universally acclaimed today. More pleasing, because more unexpected, are elegant essays commending Weldon Kees and Howard Moss.

"There is a type of criticism," Gioia writes in his preface,

> that benefits from speaking in a public idiom to a mixed audience of both professional *literati* and general readers—groups that do not entirely share common assumptions. Such criticism has traditionally been at the center of literary culture.

Like poetry, in other words, criticism suffers when it becomes wholly academicized. The university is a great but limited institution, and one of the many virtues of this book is its reassertion of a literary world that continues to exist on the other side of the gate.

Outside In

THE BROKEN STAFF: JUDAISM THROUGH CHRISTIAN EYES. By FRANK E. MANUEL. *Harvard University Press. 363 pp. $34.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT S. WISTRICH

FOR nearly 2,000 years Judaism has been a serious theological problem not only for the Christian churches but also for scholars of Christendom. Even when, in the Middle Ages, there were no Jews in

ROBERT S. WISTRICH *is Jewish Chronicle Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of London. His most recent book is* Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred *(Pantheon), which has just won the H.H. Wingate Jewish Quarterly Nonfiction Prize in Great Britain.*

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individual Christian countries, there were always fears of "Judaizing" heresies, and Jewish ideas continued to haunt Europe.

The fears went hand in hand with ignorance. Most Christians accepted as a matter of course that the teachings of Jesus had superseded the law of the Hebrew Scriptures. Circumcision, the Jewish Sabbath, the dietary laws, and the ceremonies of Judaism were all rejected as the inferior dross of a carnal faith transcended by the higher spiritual truth of Christianity. But actual knowledge, especially of post-biblical and rabbinic Judaism, was sparse among Christian scholars until around 1480, when the free-floating curiosity encouraged by Renaissance humanism sparked a resurgence of Hebraic studies.

This rekindling of a connection, severed since the first centuries of the Christian era, is the subject of Frank Manuel's fascinating book. At the center lies the phenomenon of Christian Hebraism—the revival of Hebrew as a "third culture," alongside Greek and Latin, for trilingual gentlemen-scholars. From the late 15th to the 18th centuries, the Hebraists studied the Hebrew language and Jewish religious thought. Mostly, it is true, they did so for Christian ends, whether these were missionary, eschatological, or political. Clergymen, university professors, or independent religious scholars, the Christian Hebraists were concerned not only with the true meaning of the Scriptures but with reinforcing their own faith.

Among these various Christian Hebraists there was no uniform perception of Judaism or even of ancient Israel—hardly suprising in view of the bitter divisions in the Christian world itself after the Reformation. Thus, within Catholicism there was a great gulf between the Inquisitorial spirit of Iberian Catholicism and the defense of Jews mounted in late-18th-century France by enlightened Catholics like the Abbés Bergier and Grégoire. So, too, within Protestantism there was a world of difference between the Judeophobic rantings of the great reformer Martin Luther and the marked identification with biblical Israel among scholars in England or Holland.

As Manuel shows, however, even in Holland—a new Jerusalem for Sephardic Marranos from the Iberian peninsula and a place unrivaled in the mid-17th century for its open intellectual exchange between Jewish and Christian scholars—Christian Hebraism did not necessarily lead to greater tolerance. Willem Surenhuis's Latin translation of the Mishnah did much to disseminate knowledge of rabbinic literature among Dutch and European Christians, but even so, Holland's orthodox Calvinists were far from being Judeophiles. It was Pierre Jurieu, the leader of the exiled French Huguenots in Holland, who came closer to the rabbis in his overall interpretation of biblical prophecies.

The same ambiguity can be observed elsewhere as well. Thus, outstanding German Christian Hebraists like Johann Christoph Wagenseil and Johann Andreas Eisenmenger were among the most hostile voices against Jews and Judaism in the late 17th century. They warned Christendom against the age-old enmity of the Jews by collecting all available anti-Christian texts, insults, and blasphemies in order to illustrate Jewish malevolence. Eisenmenger, a meticulous scholar from Heidelberg, nonetheless credited the blood libel—the belief that Jews engaged in the ritual murder of Christians; he would become an important source for both Christian and secular anti-Semites in the future.

Yet during these same years, the golden age of 17th-century Christian Hebraism, post-biblical Judaism did definitely cease to be a blank space in the Christian mind. The medieval biblical commentaries of Rashi, Maimonides, and Abraham Ibn Ezra were gradually assimilated and translated into Latin. Alongside older Christian stereotypes of empty Jewish rituals and arid rabbinic casuistry, there emerged a new image of Jewish rationality, thanks to giants of scholarship like the elder and younger Buxtorfs, Père Richard

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Simon, John Selden, John Lightfoot, Pieter van der Cun, Surenhuis, and many others. The ancient Jewish commonwealth, with its unique customs and laws, and what was seen as its divinely guided history, was often idealized as a model polity from which valuable lessons could be learned in the present. This was especially the case in Holland, England, and the American colonies. Some New England Puritans, who probably were closest of all to traditional Jewish thought, even anticipated the physical redemption and restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land as a prelude to their conversion to Christianity and the second coming of Christ.

MANUEL is especially interesting on the changes wrought in this picture by the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment. It is ironic to reflect that with the rise of secularism and the decline of Christianity in the 18th century, Judaism too became devalued in Europe. It was left isolated, without any obvious *raison d'être,* depicted as (in Manuel's words) a "mere remnant of ancient barbaric tribes living in the midst of civilized Europeans."

In particular, Manuel evokes the anti-Jewish animus behind the writings of some of the 18th-century English deists and French *philosophes,* who had nothing but contempt for the "priest-ridden" laws of the Jews and for the historical inaccuracies of the Bible. In France, Voltaire and Baron Paul d'Holbach poured their derision on the intolerant, fanatical, unsociable Hebrews and on their cruel, vengeful God; it was, these *philosophes* alleged, the ferocity of the Israelite priesthood which was inherited by the Christian Church. In the anti-clerical vision of these men, the Jews had no claim to have ever been a chosen people. They were merely an insignificant, backward, and rather repulsive Oriental tribe.

The 18th-century "naturalization" of Jewish history also influenced German scholars, if in a somewhat different direction. One of them was Johann David Michaelis, whose views on the ancient Hebrews were shaped by travel literature, by the new interest in the mores of desert Arabs, and by Montesquieu's notion of the "spirit of laws." Unlike most of the French *philosophes,* he extolled the humanity of the Mosaic Code and the superiority of Hebrew jurisprudence, not only over other "Oriental" cultures but even over the Greeks and Romans. Still, Michaelis was flatly opposed to citizenship for German Jews.

A similar dichotomy can be found in the philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder. On the one hand, he eulogized the *Geist* of biblical poetry as expressive of the pristine simplicity and piety of a nomad people. On the other hand, he contrasted this authentic existence of the ancient Hebrews with the "parasitism" of centuries in exile and the sordid present of late-18th-century Judaism. As Manuel puts it, for both Herder and the philosopher Immanuel Kant, living contemporary Jews, whether they were *Hofjuden* ("court Jews") or ghetto dwellers, were "anthropological freaks" in European society.

STRANGELY enough, Manuel does not follow up this insight by examining how, in the 19th and 20th centuries, German biblical criticism became ever more entangled in the new academic anti-Semitism. And indeed the later parts of his otherwise exemplary book are the least convincing and thinnest in substance. Apart from a perceptive analysis of the work of the 19th-century French historian Ernest Renan, there are surprising omissions, uncharacteristic imprecisions of style, and occasionally bizarre judgments.

Thus, Joseph de Gobineau, with his theories of racial differentiation, is said by Manuel to have exercised "an enormous influence on the appreciation of Judaism in the second half of the 19th century," a statement for which no evidence is provided. (Gobineau, undoubtedly a racist, was relatively unconcerned with the Jews, though his Germanic disciples tried to make up for the deficiency.) Again, Manuel calls Nazism a "Christian heresy," but never explicates this idea. And much more importantly, though the concluding pages of the book briefly mention some changes in the postwar stance of the Catholic Church toward Judaism, the connection between Manuel's overall theme and the Holocaust is barely touched upon.

Toward the close, Manuel asserts that official Christianity has lost its apocalyptic spirit. The major churches, he suggests hopefully, no longer "vibrate with anticipation of the imminent second coming of Christ." This judgment may appear a little premature in an era of rising fundamentalism. Nor does the prospect with which Manuel ends, of a new ecumenical tradition being fashioned out of some tepid universal moralism, seem to me likely or even particularly desirable.

Still, despite its curious finish, *The Broken Staff* is for the most part an engrossing and learned study.

Warrior

DEAN ACHESON: THE COLD WAR YEARS, 1953-71. By DOUGLAS BRINKLEY. *Yale University Press. 512 pp. $35.00.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY SALMON

IN LATE 1962, out of office for almost a decade, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson set off a "volcanic public outcry" in England when he told a West Point audience, "Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role." Bruising an ally's pride when it was in fact floundering for its place in the world is hardly what one would have expected from a man of Acheson's sophistication and facility with the English language. But his greatest strength was also his frequent downfall—he could not restrain himself from speaking "clearer than truth."

Some years later the British returned the favor when, responding to yet another of Acheson's shots, Prime Minister Harold Wilson said, "Mr. Acheson is a distinguished figure who has lost a State Department and not yet found himself a

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role." This was a respectable barb, but could not have been farther off the mark. For as Douglas Brinkley demonstrates in this impressively researched biography, the former Secretary of State, considered by many to be the architect of the cold war while in office under Harry Truman, in fact maintained a central role in policy-making even after leaving power in 1952, and continued to be an influential figure until his death in 1971.

True, there were years in the wilderness, especially during the first Eisenhower administration. But by 1957 Acheson had orchestrated his own political resurrection by wresting control of the Democrats' foreign-policy council from the liberal Adlai Stevenson-Chester Bowles wing of the party. This was, says Brinkley,

> a political comeback of significant magnitude when one considers that as late as 1956 many Democrats still viewed association with [Acheson] as political suicide.

From there Acheson went on to play an important part in the Berlin and Cuban missile crises, in the Cyprus problem, in strengthening NATO throughout the Gaullist period, and as an adviser to Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon on everything from civil rights to Vietnam to Africa policy.

ACHESON, of course, could never claim true popularity—a problem that one doubts caused him to lose sleep. But he was almost universally respected as a man with rare gifts, a statesman whose ability to penetrate complex problems and articulate policy had to be dealt with no matter how much he might irritate. Historians, too, have generally shared this view of the man, but virtually without exception their respect has been tempered by the same criticism: though brilliant, Acheson failed to "grow." In other words, while others of his generation, such as Averell Harriman, George Kennan, Clark Clifford, George Ball, came to believe that Soviet power could be tamed through arms control and détente, and to reject confrontation for conciliation, Acheson to the end believed that military strength and a unified Europe were the only certain paths to victory in the cold war. To this criticism of Acheson, in which he concurs, Brinkley adds a charge which in the 90's may be even graver: insensitivity.

Politics was, indeed, a contact sport for Dean Acheson, for he believed that the stakes in the East/West battle were nothing less than the future of democracy and of Western civilization. Brinkley's thorough account of Acheson's unvarying perspective on the world clearly reveals the central role Europe played in his thinking and why he believed the key to Europe, and so the key to victory in the cold war, lay with Germany. Anyone who crossed Acheson on these fundamental principles, or simply failed to measure up, was subjected to heated argument and quite possibly ad-hominem rebuke. Adlai Stevenson, Acheson remarked, "had a third-rate mind that he can't make up." John Kenneth Galbraith was "an ineffectual gadfly." The years Chester Bowles had spent doing public relations on Madison Avenue had created in him "a permanent deformity like the Chinese habit of footbinding."

Brinkley gives his greatest attention to Acheson's feud with his successor, Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, especially over the role of conventional and nuclear military power. For Acheson, nuclear brinkmanship as practiced by Dulles and as set out in the doctrine of massive retaliation could never substitute for a credible limited-war capability based on conventional military strength. The focus on nuclear weapons, Acheson contended, gave us the false hope that we could purchase security on the cheap. What we needed instead were robust, balanced, and expensive conventional forces, especially in Europe, that could credibly deter and if necessary defeat a full range of aggression.

BRINKLEY believes the differences between the two men have been exaggerated, and he may be right. But the fundamental questions they debated in the mid-50's—the importance of NATO, the place of nuclear weapons in our defense doctrine, the idea of limited war—framed much of the history that followed. When in 1961 President John F. Kennedy called on him to head a Berlin-crisis task force, Acheson ultimately advised the President to build up conventional forces on an emergency basis—by, among other things, sending three divisions to Germany. Acheson was saying: make it clear you are willing (and able) to go to war over the issue of free access to Berlin. Kennedy largely followed his advice; Khrushchev responded with a call for negotiations, and a little later with the Berlin Wall. No one, especially the former Secretary of State, was satisfied with the outcome, but Acheson had offered clear-cut, persuasive, and sound advice at a critical time to an administration that Brinkley shows was unsure of itself.

Just months later, Acheson participated in the Cuban missile crisis. Here the contrast between Acheson and those whom historians tend to admire for their "growth" and "sensitivity" is quite salient. Acheson opposed a blockade of Cuba, on the grounds that it might simply give the Soviets time to make operational the nuclear weapons they had delivered, and urged an immediate air strike instead. But Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, considered the nuclear missiles in Cuba no real military threat, even though once armed they would be capable of hitting virtually every city in the United States. George Ball, then Under Secretary of State, rested his own argument against an air strike on his concern with how it would look to the international community. Attorney General Robert Kennedy compared a possible American air strike on Cuba with Japan's sneak attack on American forces at Pearl Harbor—a notion Acheson later described as "a high-school thought unworthy of people charged with the government of a great country."

Though the President rejected Acheson's advice—and Brinkley believes the former Secretary's po-

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sition was too risky—one comes away from this chapter breathing a sigh of relief that Acheson was at least on the scene to counter some of the foolishness.

ACHESON continued in an advisory role in the Kennedy, Johnson, and—most surprisingly—Nixon administrations. Surprisingly because, as Brinkley notes,

> With the possible exception of Joseph McCarthy, John Foster Dulles, and Nelson Rockefeller, there was no man Acheson loathed more than Nixon.

But with the then-National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger as matchmaker, the two men discovered they had much in common.

By no means, however, did they always agree. Acheson regarded the 1970 incursion into Cambodia as a grave error. More generally, he thought that Nixon, like his predecessors, was neglecting Europe in pursuit of uncertain aims in the war in Vietnam. Brinkley's discussion of Acheson's thinking and advice on America's involvement in Vietnam is certainly the most thorough to date.

The former Secretary's last major policy battle—organizing opposition to Senator Mike Mansfield's call for major unilateral troop reductions in Europe—marked an appropriate end to his career. Kissinger, who saw Mansfield's move as a significant threat to NATO, asked Acheson to help bring together the "old guard" for a major public statement against it. With George Ball, Lyman Lemnitzer (former commander of NATO), and others gathered around the table with the President, Acheson argued vigorously against any compromise with Congress—the position advocated by Nixon's Secretary of State, William Rogers. With the help of the united front of former leaders, the administration followed the no-compromise recommendation, and Mansfield's amendment was soundly defeated in the Senate.

THERE is a dearth of scholarship on Acheson, and this history fills a void. But Brinkley's account is marred by the condescending tone of a historian who believes he knows more and understands the world better than his subject. For example, he writes:

> The Eurocentric Acheson never, whether in office or after, recognized the strength of currents running against the old European imperial tradition.

But Brinkley's own account belies this interpretation. It is clear that Acheson saw very clearly the forces that were undermining Europe's colonial role. Why else would he have chided Britain for its reluctance to let go of its empire? It is not that Acheson misread the trends against colonialism; he just did not view them as necessarily positive.

Brinkley spends an entire chapter on Acheson's positions with respect to Africa, especially decolonization in Angola and the Rhodesian declaration of independence. From this account it is obvious that the former Secretary feared national-liberation movements, opposed sanctions on Ian Smith's regime in Rhodesia, and thought many of the new noncolonial rulers in Africa would be incompetent and subject to Soviet manipulation. To Brinkley, this proves Acheson's "insensitivity to the aspirations of black Africans. . . ." He quotes approvingly from Gaddis Smith's biography of Acheson, to the effect that Acheson "gave only a glancing attention to the mass of the world's population who did not have white skins. . . ."

But Brinkley fails to offer much of an argument in support of these criticisms, and once again his own book provides alternative explanations for Acheson's thinking. Yes, Acheson was "insensitive" to national-liberation movements (and to Britain and to Israel and to virtually everyone from time to time)—not, however, because he did not care about individual freedom for black Africans but because he thought these movements were the least likely route to liberation. Yes, he tended to give less attention to the non-Western world—not, however, because he was a racist (as Gaddis Smith implies) but because he thought the solution to the problems of the cold war lay elsewhere. One can disagree with Acheson on these and a hundred other critical issues, but Brinkley refuses to confront them on the level Acheson himself would have demanded—the level of a comprehensive analysis of politics among nations.

Brinkley is correct about one thing, however. To the day he died, Acheson was a rigid cold warrior, consistent in his thinking about the Soviet threat and the need for military preparedness to counter it. Everything we learned in the 1980's tends to confirm the essential correctness of his judgment. Now that the cold war is over, and won, we can be thankful that at a critical time in the life of the nation, such a man led and was listened to. However inadvertently, Brinkley's biography is the best argument yet for Henry Kissinger's assessment of Acheson: history bestowed on him "its highest accolade—it proved him right."

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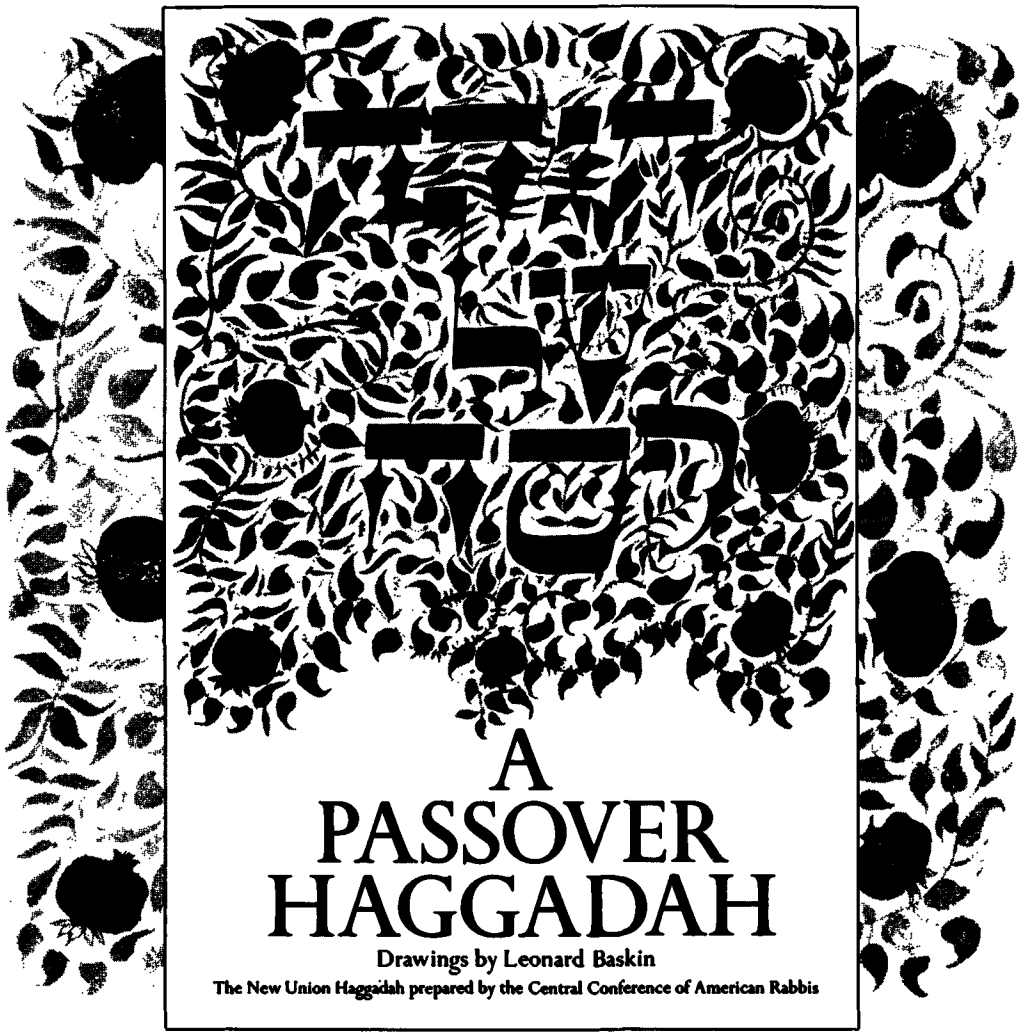

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